



The author, Andrew Buchanan, editing a film.

GOING TO THE CINEMA

Andrew Buchanan



Revised

by

Stanley Reed



PHOENIX HOUSE LIMITED
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To
THE ADULT CINEMA-GOER
OF TO-MORROW

This is one of the Excursions Series of books on leisure-time activities. It has been written to help its readers to understand and enjoy the Cinema.

Those volumes in the Excursions Series already published are *Going into the Country*, by George Beardmore; *Enjoying Paintings*, by A. C. Ward; *Going to the Theatre*, by John Allen; *Going to the Ballet*, by Arnold Haskell; *Going to a Concert*, by Lionel Salter; *Enjoying Books*, by Geoffrey Trease; *Going to London*, by Anthony Weymouth; *Enjoying Radio and Television*, by Robert Donnett; *Going to Museums*, by Jacqueline Palmer; *Going into the Past*, by Gordon J. Copley; *Going to the Opera*, by Lionel Salter; and *Exploring the Rocks*, by Christopher Trent.

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1

WHY GO TO THE CINEMA?

THE DOORS ARE OPENING. WE ARE SHUFFLING FORWARD IN the queue. Now we are almost at the entrance, with its big pillars and gaily painted walls. Photographs from the films in long gold frames surround us. Here we are—entering the brightly lit foyer. The girls in the glass-sided pay box are working at lightning speed. Our money slides down the shining brass counter, and out shoot the tickets

Up the wide stairs, along the corridor, lined with flowers and more photographs, and into the cinema, which is softly lit. We have entered another world.

'This way, please.' We are being led along the gangway to our seats. The show hasn't begun, but music is playing, and voices are murmuring all round us. We sink into our comfortable velvet-covered chairs, and are ready to enjoy the programme.

Several hundred other people have come for the same purpose as we have—to sit for two or three hours in the warm darkness and watch people and places on a huge screen—to be taken across the world perhaps, to places real and imaginary—in and out of luxurious, shabby or mysterious houses—to share danger, excitement, suspense, fun—to laugh, to cheer, perhaps even to cry.

Now the music is growing softer. The lights are slowly fading down, and darkness is descending over the whole cinema. The screen begins to glow, and the beautiful silk curtains are opening. The title of the first film appears on the screen, introduced by its own special music.

The show has begun!

Now we are going to look at what the screen offers us with very keen and critical eyes—eyes more keen and critical, perhaps, than we have ever used in the cinema before.

Soon we shall visit the studios and have a look at the people who make the films for us. We shall find out who does what, and discover all kinds of fascinating things about film production.

That is the idea of this book—to give you an opportunity to become a really knowledgeable person about the cinema. And in time, when there are enough people like you with sound knowledge about films, programmes will become better and better in order to satisfy you.

How Do You Choose Your Films?

Let's take a look at ourselves—the cinema audience—to begin with. Without us, of course, there couldn't be any cinema. There are more than twenty million of us in Britain who go to the cinema every week. Why?

Why have you come here to-night? Why has the person next to you on the right, and the one on the left, the one behind you, and the one in front come to-night? There are more answers to that question than you might think at first. I should be very surprised to learn you had all come on this particular night for exactly the same reason.

There are, of course, three very obvious reasons why the cinema is so popular. First, it is easy to get to; unless you live in a very remote place there is bound to be a cinema near your home. Secondly, it is a cheap form of entertainment—much cheaper than the theatre, for instance. Thirdly, you can go in when you like, and come out when you like. It's a free and easy sort of show. But there's a lot more to it than that.

These are the sort of things people say before they set out for the cinema:

'Oh, come on, let's go to the pictures. I'm fed up. There's nothing to do at home.'

'Saturday? Oh, we always go to the flicks on Saturday night.'

'Bing Crosby's on at the Royalty. Come on, or we shan't get in.'

'I've forgotten who's playing in it, but they say it's a jolly good picture.'

'I liked the book. The film ought to be good.'

'It's about the early settlers in Canada. I love that sort of film.'

'Hitchcock directed it. His films are always worth seeing.'

'It's raining. Coming to the pictures?'

'We always go two or three times a week. We see all the programmes at both our cinemas.'

Now which of those reasons is yours? One of them is almost certain to be. Some people go because often without knowing it they want to get away from something else—to forget that they are just ordinary people leading rather humdrum lives. Actually, they are probably not as ordinary as they think they are, but perhaps they don't realise the importance of the jobs they do. Far-sighted, intelligent film directors have put so-called ordinary people on the screen so that other people may know how they live and work and what an important part they play in the lives of a lot of other people. I will tell you more about these films in the chapter called 'A Film About Ourselves,' but for the moment, we are considering the usual sort of cinema entertainment where the characters are imaginary people.

Escape into a Modern Fairyland

Those who go to the cinema to escape from everyday life usually like to see on the screen people and places as unlike themselves and their surroundings as possible, and to imagine for an hour or so that *they* are those people. If they live in a small house which is in a row of many small houses all much

alike (as so many of us do) they want to see spacious, luxurious apartments with sumptuous furnishings. If they have to struggle with an old-fashioned inconvenient kitchen, it gives them a thrill to see a kitchen full of gleaming gadgets where the heroine does most of her work by pressing buttons and therefore manages to look smart and charming all the time. *Her* nose doesn't get shiny and her hair damp and stringy through having to keep peering into a hot oven and taking lids off steaming saucepans. *She* doesn't queue up for a bus or tram to take her to work; she steps into a long shining car and drives, or is driven, off to an office as sumptuous as her own luxury flat. That is, if she goes to work at all. Perhaps she is so rich she can spend her life playing. Just to look at her makes the people who go to the cinema to escape from everyday life forget that their alarm clocks will go off at seven o'clock to-morrow morning as usual. What bliss, what delicious escape from all the boring and disagreeable things of their own lives!

That is what the people feel who say, 'Oh, come on, let's go to the pictures. I'm fed up. There's nothing to do at home.' It is also probably what the people feel who go regularly to the cinema three or four times a week. They want to be transported to a world where people live in modern palaces and dress and eat and play like modern versions of fairy-tale princes and princesses. Or, if they are not princes and princesses when the film begins, if they are poor and rather unhappy, they get what they want in the end, provided they are the heroes and heroines. All this isn't real, of course. Hardly anybody lives like this. It is a sort of modern fairy tale where the kings and queens are rich business men and their wives, the princes and princesses are their sons and daughters, the palaces luxurious apartment houses, the royal coach a gleaming 50 h.p. car. People who have outgrown Hans Andersen and Grimm, or who consider themselves far too smart and modern ever to have believed in them for a

moment, follow the adventures of the 'princes' and 'princesses' of the screen with breathless excitement.

Unfortunately those people who go to the cinema several times a week without fail and see all there is to see, sometimes have their time and money wasted because, of course, some films are hardly worth seeing. The idea that 'any film is better than no film' surely *can't* be right. It is playing into the hands of the cinema showmen, some of whom declare that the public will accept anything.

Now the people who go to see a film because they are especially interested in its story, or have studied the work of the Director, get more satisfaction out of one show than the others do out of half a dozen. It lasts them longer. They get value for their pocket-money. They don't forget it as soon as they step into the street from the cinemã. They haven't had time to analyse it consciously while they were looking at it, of course, but they have been storing up impressions, and they have something to look back upon at intervals for hours, days, weeks or even months afterwards. They are not satisfied simply by the fact that famous stars are playing in the film. They judge each of their performances on its merits. They can recognise the results of good directing, good camera work, good art direction, as well as good acting, when they see them, and they know how these results are obtained. They get a great deal more out of their cinema entertainment than the people who don't pick and choose but see every film that comes to their favourite cinema.

Do You Follow the Stars?

Now what about the people who 'follow the stars'? They go to see a film not because they are interested in the story but because it is featuring a handsome hero and a beautiful heroine who are very bright stars indeed and whom they have seen before and liked, or who have been so built up by publicity that they think they must be good. This is understand-

able to some extent because a great many films are based upon stories which have never been heard of before, and so, without any stars in them, they would not attract the public. But when a famous star is advertised as appearing, the story is often only the frame in which he or she is presented. There's a lot in this star business, and vast sums of money are involved in it. America has built up her film industry on stars, and the public has become star-minded. So much so, in fact, that, with few exceptions, the character a star is portraying is usually but a shadow, for the personality of the star shines through all the time. By that I mean the screen actor rarely loses his identity in the part he plays, as he should, of course. He should lose himself in it so completely that the audience is made to forget who the star is, and thinks only of the character in the story. This is achieved in some cases, but comparatively seldom, and that is a point against the star system which you should remember.

Many people go to see films because they liked the books or plays from which they have been adapted. The film based on Tolstoy's famous novel, *War and Peace*, drew thousands of people who read the book quite apart from the fact that Audrey Hepburn and Mel Ferrer starred in it. Thousands more who had not read the book were attracted by the fact that these two stars appeared in it.

You might belong to either group; those who, with a knowledge of books and plays, go to see films adapted from them, or those who are uninterested in literature and drama, but who know all the details in the lives of their favourite stars and will go to see them in any film, good or bad. You might belong to both groups!

Sometimes producing firms, knowing the drawing power of stars, present them in cheap and inadequate stories, which is unfair both to the stars and the public. This does not often happen, but the commercial value of the stars is so great that there is sometimes a temptation to exploit them by featuring

them in subjects unworthy of them. When you have read a little more of this book, I hope that, if you do not already belong to the first group, you will choose to do so. But ask yourself those questions. Find out what really attracts you. And when you have done that, pause to consider whether you have ever realised that, say, John Wayne, or Dirk Bogarde or Doris Day, are always themselves, despite the characters they are impersonating, and that they are intentionally so, because their special characteristics, known to millions, are what audiences like to see repeated again and again.

One reason why film stars have been able to imprint their personalities so deeply on the mind of the cinema-goer is because they are shown so vividly and much larger than life size. The slight raising of an eyebrow, the twitch of a mouth, the movements of fingers—such tiny details are emphasised on the screen and engrave the likeness of a star on the mind.

Character actors are in rather a different category, especially when they disguise themselves in heavy make-up. Then they do lose their own personalities, at least visibly. Michael Redgrave is one of the finest of screen actors. He sinks himself into the part he is playing. He gave a wonderful performance some years ago as Barnes Wallis, the scientist of *The Dam Busters*. He really was Wallis. I remember him too as the schoolmaster in *The Browning Version*, and as the young shop assistant in *Kipps*—another example of the star who extinguished his personal light, and transformed himself into the character which the story demanded of him.

However, a great many film stories are of the world to-day—modern mystery plots—gangster, newspaper and financial adventures—and in these the stars are almost justified in appearing as themselves. Spencer Tracy is a very skilled actor—polished, experienced, with the ability to project his strong personality directly at you without seeming to do so. He is so experienced that he doesn't appear to be acting at all, which is, of course, perfect acting. Now Spencer

Tracy remains himself, and it doesn't seem wrong for him to do so. Indeed it isn't wrong. During the excitement created by the plot, the audience will more or less forget his real identity, and yet so established is he as a screen personality that it will still be Spencer Tracy who is involved in the mystery, or the murder, or whatever the story is about. *He* is really uppermost, despite his flawless acting. But you will find, in due course, that acting in the greatest sense of the word, and in the tradition of the theatre, demands that the actor shall lose his identity in the part he is playing, and very few film stars do that.

A film should be able to draw and hold the public by its story, the quality of its production, and the perfect acting of a cast of players all of whom remain anonymous. That may sound very strange, but dependence upon stars instead of upon subject-matter tends to make film stories trivial. Remember, the play's the thing, whether on screen or stage.

There are other reasons for the great popularity of the cinema which are not quite so obvious, perhaps. Let's compare it with the ordinary or legitimate theatre, for instance. I don't suppose you go to the theatre a great deal; at least not half as frequently as you visit the cinema. For one thing it is not so accessible, nor so cheap, and because the performances are given at fixed times, it is not so convenient. But the theatre is far, far older than the cinema—centuries old—and yet, despite its fascination and its noble traditions, it has never had so big a public as the cinema. Why?

Everyone Can See and Hear

The first big difference between stage and screen is, of course, that living people appear on the former, whilst only their photographed selves appear on the latter. Now you'd think that real people would be a bigger attraction than mere moving pictures of them, but this has not proved to be so. One interesting reason is that the actors and actresses on the

stage are naturally *only life-size*, and in a large theatre they appear quite small, especially if you are sitting right at the back, or high up in the circle or gallery, whereas on the screen, they are enlarged enormously. If you have ever sat in the front rows of a cinema so that you have had to crane your neck back to look at the screen you will have realised how greatly magnified the characters are. Human heads in screen close-ups are bigger than a tall man. Now, magnifying the characters like this enables a huge audience to see them so clearly (without realising that they are enlarged) that it is able to understand and appreciate the story more easily than when watching a stage performance where the natural-sized actors seem so small. To those accustomed to seeing lots of films, stage actors seem smaller than ever.

This comparison is not intended to cast any reflection upon the legitimate theatre, which remains the true home of dramatic expression. It is drawn solely to trace the reasons for the cinema's unequalled ability to attract and entertain millions of people in every part of the world.

The voices of the players are increased in volume so that everyone can hear. They are projected from loud-speakers behind the cinema screen, and they can usually be heard better than the voices of many actors on the stage.

To sum up, what the cinema offers can be seen and heard more easily by more people than what the theatre offers, and this is a big reason for the cinema's popularity. In favour of the theatre, however, it should be said that beautiful voices and perfect diction of living people will always remain superior to projected voices relayed through loud-speakers, even if they are not completely audible in every part of the theatre. The greatest actors are, of course.

Most cinema-goers are not conscious of these reasons, but they find films 'easy to understand'—which comes to much the same thing.

Another reason for the cinema's success is that every week

it offers a new programme—sometimes two new programmes. Think, for a moment, of the production and organisation this involves—at least fifty-two fresh programmes a year, usually with two feature films in each—more than a hundred films! As it takes several months to make one film you can begin to realise what a vast industry lies behind the cinema. It is true that television offers a new programme every day, but a great deal of the entertainment offered on television is unrehearsed—interviews, quiz programmes, competitions and ‘panel games’—requiring little preparation and no great expense. Television, moreover, itself uses a great deal of film to eke out its programmes. The film industry has the task of providing a new programme of elaborate and costly entertainment every week, year after year. Not only can we see four new films every week in most cinemas but they are shown in hundreds of cinemas *simultaneously*. A feature film is generally released all over the country at the same time.

There is really no limit to the number of cinemas a film can be shown in at the same time, except the limit set by the number of positive prints made of it. You can compare a film with a snapshot. You take a photograph of the dog, have the negative developed, and one print made. If you like the result, you can have dozens of prints taken from the negative. So it is with a film. The master or original negative will provide countless positive prints, and it is these which are shown in cinemas. I once met an old lady who didn't know there was any difference between a negative film and a positive film, and who thought that when a film was showing in her suburb as well as in the next, a man was waiting outside the cinema to rush it to the other one as soon as it had finished! A theatrical company, on the other hand, takes several months to tour a part of the country with a play: a week here, another there. Being human, it can appear in only one place at a time. Being mechanical, a film can appear in a hundred different places at the same moment.

The film industry is broadly divided into three groups—the exhibitors, who show the films in cinemas; the renters, who supply them to the exhibitors; and the producers who supply them to the renters. As you probably know, most of the big cinemas to-day are grouped into what are called circuits, each circuit being owned by a particular company. There are, however, quite a number of independent (privately owned) cinemas, often in country districts. But whichever cinema you go to in these days, the shape of the programme will almost invariably be the same—two feature films divided by a news reel, and perhaps a cartoon, or a short film, and then the trailers, those swift exciting little advertisements of the films which are coming next week. Twenty years ago, the usual programme consisted of only one feature film, supported by five or six short films, which gave variety to the show, and lots of people to-day say they would prefer to see only one long and really good feature, with interesting shorts, instead of two long films, especially as the second feature, as it is called, is sometimes not up to standard.

We have seen that some of the reasons why the cinema is so popular are: accessibility, cheapness, continuous performance, good visibility because the players appear much larger than life-size, good audibility because voices and other sounds are amplified through loud-speakers, a weekly change of programme, and the fact that a film can be shown everywhere simultaneously.

Now all those reasons, extremely important in themselves, and all more or less related to the *showing* of films, do not account for the popularity of the *subject-matter* of cinema programmes.

Films are Easy To Understand

Being a great popular medium of entertainment, the cinema has to cater for all classes and ages of people, and to succeed it must offer cleverly made and easily understood stories or plays. This it does. To illustrate this, forget films for

a moment and pick up a daily newspaper. No doubt you read the papers and so you know how easy they are to understand, whether you merely glance at the headlines or read them thoroughly. Now, throw down the newspaper, and select a good book—some essays, or poetry, or really first-class fiction. As I have no knowledge of your tastes in literature, I can only imagine what you have selected: maybe Shelley's poems, or some of Lamb's Essays, or a novel by one of the Brontë sisters; even a technical text-book will do. Read it for a while, and you will find that you just can't glance through the pages as if reading newspaper headlines, or brief articles. Either you must read the book with your full powers of concentration, or you must put it down. Poems, essays—all great literature—demand something from you. Such books are read by those who have developed, or who are developing, a love of fine writing. One cannot expect to be able to appreciate fully great poetry or prose without having trained oneself to read it, and so to have developed one's understanding and taste for it. It is the same, of course, with all the arts. They must be approached slowly, with patience, and then gradually, almost without one noticing the fact, one begins to understand the meaning of the poem, or the great musical composition.

Now the purpose of the newspaper is entirely different. One does not have to develop a taste for it. It is immediately understandable. Its purpose is to inform swiftly, briefly, entertainingly, and although the modern newspaper frequently contains articles by the best authors and thinkers, journalism as a whole should not be classed as literature. Newspapers are read and enjoyed by millions of people, but a large proportion of them rarely if ever read good literature. Either they have never developed a liking for it, or they haven't time. But they can always pick up the paper and fully understand every word they read. It makes little if any demand upon their brains. It does their thinking for them, so

to speak, whereas the author of a well-written book demands that one should think as one reads his words. One's imagination is fired by his creative genius.

The cinema, like the newspaper, has to cater for millions, and to do so, must make no demands on the public. And so it presents its plays in simple form—rather like a huge picture book. We do not need to develop a taste for films, or to concentrate upon them week after week before their meaning is clear to us. We understand nearly all of them instantly. If films were not made in such a way that millions could understand and enjoy them, the cinema would not be so popular. Strictly speaking, the film is not among the arts; at least the commercial film isn't. Eventually, it will be, but at present the average cinema programme, designed to entertain on a mass scale, is as removed from art as is the newspaper from literature. It is important to realise this, because as we study the various types of films being made, we shall discover some exceptions that really do justify being classified as works of art, and the fact that we rarely see such films, or even know of their existence, will be of special interest. Now the continuous flow of films into cinemas makes the average person forget to be selective. Most of us accept what is on the screen, and whether we enjoy it or not, we will surely go again next week, because, like reading the newspaper, cinema-going is largely a habit.

I hope, however, that by the time you have finished reading this book, you will be so much more critical that you will hesitate to spend your time and money on shows that are not up to standard but will regard each visit as something special, because you will be selecting the films you want to see, and have good reasons for doing so. Your visits may be just as frequent, or even more numerous than now, but always with a purpose—a purpose that will definitely increase your enjoyment in proportion to your increased powers of perception.

The Man Behind the Little Glass Window

We are back in the cinema again, and there is just one other point to which I should like to draw your attention before the lights go down. The skill, or lack of it, with which a film is shown in your cinema can make a great difference to your enjoyment. Indeed, it may surprise you to know that a good film can be shown so badly that it will be spoilt for the audience. This doesn't often happen, of course, but it emphasises what an important part the projection plays in catering for your enjoyment. Few people think of the projectionists in their fire-proof room, high up at the back. The little glass windows through which the film is projected are the only visible signs of projection, and even these pass unnoticed by most of us.

Now the projectionist is responsible not only for the clear and steady showing of the film, but he also controls the volume of the sound. He and his assistants must be on the alert every minute. The modern electrically-driven projector is a wonderful machine, but like all pieces of mechanism, it needs constant human control. Today there is a shortage of good projectionists and some cinemas have installed automatic systems which not only control the projector itself but also open and close the curtains, switch the house lights on and off and play gramophone records in the interval. In this way one skilled man can run the 'box' of even a very large cinema. It is too early to say yet, however, whether automatic projection will prove as satisfactory as expert operators.

Sometimes the pictures may have become blurred, either for a short or a long time. This was because the lens slipped slightly and threw the film out of focus. Vibration might have caused this to happen, but only very rarely does the modern projector behave so badly. (Incidentally, the actual photography might have been out of focus, and then it is not right to blame the projection. Poor photography never oc-

curs in a feature film, but sometimes it appears in news-reels. We'll learn more about that later on, when we're dealing with the making of films.) If the film stops altogether, it has probably broken, and the projectionist has to mend it quickly, or run it on a little way, and start afresh. It is not necessarily the projectionist's fault when the film breaks. It might easily have arrived in a damaged or worn condition.

Lastly, he must keep the sound normal—not too loud, nor too soft. The audibility of the sound track varies according to how full the cinema is. It needs adjusting very carefully. The presence of hundreds of people tends to absorb the sound, whereas in an empty cinema it rebounds off the walls and ceiling and becomes overpowering if not toned down. Acoustic properties are of the very greatest importance, of course, and in those old cinemas which were originally town halls, or built for other purposes, the acoustics are often very inferior to those of the modern cinema especially built to make the sound projection as perfect as possible.

Of course a great deal depends upon the sound system installed in a cinema, and how it has been wired. The two most famous sound systems from America are Western Electric, and R.C.A. (Radio Corporation of America), whilst a famous British system is British Acoustics. If the sound is always rather difficult to hear, or seems blurred, or hollow, then it is almost certain to be due to the poor acoustic properties of the cinema itself. If, for example, you were able to see and hear a film at one of London's finest cinemas in the West End, where the projection is perfect, and then you saw the same film in some little provincial cinema which was once something else, you might not believe it was the same film because the sound would be inferior, and this makes all the difference to one's appreciation of a picture. You might well find, of course, that the little provincial cinema showed the film quite as well as the big London cinema, but I merely cite it as an example of the big part played by projection.

We have, of course, begun our study of films backwards, starting in the cinema, which is familiar to us, instead of with the script, which is the beginning of a film. We have done this intentionally, but now we are going to follow the film back to the studios to find out how it is made and who is responsible for each of the results achieved.

The first item on the programme we are going to look at is the 'big picture'—the main feature film.

2

WHAT IS A FILM?

WHEN YOU TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH OF A FRIEND YOU TELL him he must keep perfectly still, or he'll spoil the picture. If you were to take a film of him, the reverse would be the case, because if he didn't move there would be no point in filming him.

Movement, therefore, is the first essential in film-making, and to photograph movement so that it can be reproduced exactly as it occurred is something only the movie camera can do.

To understand how this is done, you should compare a strip of film with an ordinary negative which you would use in any camera for taking snapshots. But instead of the strip or roll of film remaining stationary in the film camera as it would in the snapshot camera, it moves swiftly from one spool to another whilst the film is being taken, so that the result is not just one photograph but a great many, one after the other. Now each one of these photographs, or frames as they are called, carries the action which is being filmed a stage further. Looked at separately each frame is a complete little photograph in itself, but taken together, all the frames are closely related to each other, for they are photographs of the same moving subject, each one in advance of the one before it.

Imagine you are being filmed. You stand before the camera and raise your arms from your sides to above your head. Now it might take you three seconds to do that. If you were to examine the little roll of film which was used to photograph you moving your arms upwards, you would see that in the first frame your arms would be at your sides; in the second frame they would be about an inch or two away

from your sides; in the third frame they might be five inches away; and so on. By about the tenth or eleventh frame they would probably be about nine inches away on their journey upwards. In the twentieth frame, perhaps they would be nearly halfway up, but it would depend, of course, on how quickly you moved your arms.

Thousands of Tiny Photographs Make a Film

Now it might take fifty or sixty frames, or even more, to photograph that simple arm movement, and if you compared the first frame with the very last one, you would see the beginning and the end of that movement. Remember that each one of those frames is a separate little photograph, quite still and lifeless in itself, but, when related to the frames on either side of it, and run through at high speed, it comes to life, by association with the others. Inside the camera is a shutter which revolves swiftly and causes a black-out between each frame (and a similar revolving shutter operates on the projection machine when the film is run through in the cinema). In both cases it is the dividing of each frame by the shutter, so quickly as to be invisible to the eye, which merges the frames into each other to create smooth movement.

Film is made in several sizes which are classified as standard and sub-standard. The standard size is 35 millimetres, upon which all cinema films are made. Amongst the sub-standard sizes are 16 millimetres and 9.5 millimetres, which we will deal with in a separate chapter later on, for they are extremely important. Here, however, we are concerned only with the standard size. The 35 mm. film is nearly an inch and a half wide from edge to edge, but the actual frame or photograph is less than an inch wide, and just over half an inch in length. The rest of the width of the film is occupied by rows of sprocket holes on either side, which fit the cogs in the camera and also the projector, and by a narrow space on one side to allow for the sound track.

Now film moves past the camera lens at a speed of *ninety feet per minute*, during which time *twenty-four frames pass in a second*. That is why as many as sixty frames would be necessary to film you raising your arms from your sides to above your head.

You can realise what a tremendous amount of experimenting was necessary before it was discovered that ninety feet of film a minute was the correct speed at which film should travel to capture human movements, as well as to record human speech, which I'll deal with in a few moments. Before talking films were invented, silent films used to run at a speed of *sixteen frames a second*, and so the increased speed to twenty-four necessitated the altering of the mechanism of all equipment.

How the Roll of Film is Used

The 35 mm. negative film is supplied in rolls of 1,000 feet, which are loaded into cameras. Studio cameras are electrically driven. They are very heavy instruments and are mounted on large tripods of wood or metal which can be wheeled silently about the studio floor. Lighter cameras which can easily be carried by hand are often used for exteriors, and these are driven by clockwork, but in both cases, the mechanism, electric or clockwork, ensures that the cameras turn at the constant speed of ninety feet per minute. If the speed varied, the action on the screen would be abnormal. The faster the film ran, the slower would be the action. The slower it ran, the faster the action. Those slow motion scenes you see, of divers jumping off a springboard and moving unnaturally slowly down into the water for instance, were taken with a special slow-motion camera in which the film was moving at a tremendous speed.

When the roll of negative has been exposed in the camera, it is removed, in a dark room, placed in a tin which is sealed with tape, and sent to a laboratory where it is developed,

after which a positive print is made. This first print is viewed by the producers as soon as possible (usually the next morning, because laboratories work all night) to enable any faults to be discovered so that scenes may be retaken at once when necessary. First positive prints are called 'rushes.'

How the Sounds Are Photographed

Now for the filming of speech and sounds. The cameras I have just referred to are, of course, the *picture* cameras. They take the actual photographs in the frames we have been discussing, but they have no connection with the recording of speech, sounds, or music. They are purely and simply picture cameras. To film the voices of people, another camera is needed—the *recording camera* which, in turn, is not concerned with taking moving pictures of people, but only with photographing their voices, natural sounds, or music.

The recording camera actually photographs, on a roll of film, the sound waves which reach it through the microphone, which is always concealed somewhere in a scene. It is concealed, of course, so that it shall not appear in the picture.

All sound vibrations in a scene, whether caused by human voices, music, footsteps, traffic, or anything else, pass through the microphone on to extremely delicate recording instruments, and are intercepted by a bright little light—a mere slit—which creates a wavy line on the edge of the film as it runs through the recording camera, and in that wavy line, electrically recorded, are all the sounds and voices which occurred in the scene. Just as one camera photographs or films a man's face, so the recording camera photographs the sound of his voice, and the result is a sound track.

Matching the Sounds to the Action

But you will be wondering how on earth the actual pictures are matched up with the corresponding voices or sounds. First, both the picture camera and the recording camera are driven by the same electric motor, so that their running speeds are

identical. Also, of course, they start and stop at the same time. Secondly, before a scene begins, a board with wooden clappers on top of it, is held in front of the picture camera, and when both this camera and the recording one are running at full speed, the clapper is banged, and withdrawn. The result is that the film in the picture camera actually photographs the clappers being banged, whilst, through the concealed microphone, the sound of the bang reaches the recording camera, and the bang is registered on the sound track.

When the positive prints of both the picture and the sound track have been printed by the laboratory, they can quite easily be matched or, to use the correct term, synchronised, by placing the *frame* of the picture which shows the clappers actually coming together to create the bang, against the point in the sound track where the photograph of that bang was recorded (it usually shows as a high jagged peak, for it is a much louder and crisper sound than the human voice or general noises). Once these two points have been matched, then all other speech or sounds which follow must synchronise perfectly, for both cameras were being driven at the same speed, and for the same period. As two separate cameras are so employed, two separate films are obtained—the roll of pictures and the roll of corresponding sounds. To be able both to see and hear the result at this stage, the producers use a different kind of projector from the one used in cinemas. It is called double-headed, because it is so built that it can run the two separate rolls of film simultaneously and in synchronisation.

When a production has been completed, and all the positive prints, or rushes, and their corresponding sound tracks have been assembled in the right order, and properly edited, then, and only then, is the *original negative* of both the pictures and the sounds matched to the assembled positives of both. By matched, I mean that all the exact scenes in the edited positive film are extracted from the negative, so that, finally,

the negatives of the pictures and of the sounds are identical with the positives. Then, the negatives of both—for the pictures and the sounds are still separate, of course—are merged together, and a *combined positive print is made*. That means that for the first time the sound track runs down the side of the picture, and both are on the same film. It is in this form that the film is projected in the cinema.

I should explain that the projector runs at exactly the same speed—ninety feet per minute—as do the cameras, so that it is really reversing the operation of the camera by projecting outwardly the action that was filmed.

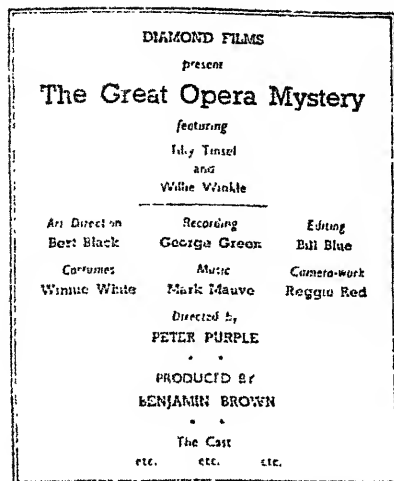
Well, that explains what a film is and how it is employed both in the camera and the projector, and so now we will turn our attention to those whose combined efforts result in the production of the modern motion picture.

What Is a Credit Title?

I wonder whether you bother to read all the names of the people who made a film when they come on the screen at the beginning? Look at the list opposite, for instance.

As you will guess, of course, these are all fictitious names, but this list gives you an idea of the different jobs there are in film-making. Presently I shall mention some real Producers and Directors and their work.

Quite a number of cinema-goers don't bother to read the credit titles. They are content to read merely the title, and the names of the stars who are appearing. Usually, the big stars' names are displayed with the title of the film, but sometimes they appear in the long list of the cast, in which case you run your eye down the names quickly, picking out those familiar to you. It is after the players' names that what are known as the technical credit titles appear, and to these many people pay little attention. But these are the names of the highly skilled specialists who actually made the film and they are just as important as the people who appear in it—



sometimes more important—but because they are never seen, I am afraid they are often ignored.

To discriminating cinema-goers, the names of the technical experts mean a very great deal, for they know that these people are really the *invisible stars* in a film, and that it is their ability, originality of thought, artistic genius and dramatic feeling which are expressed in the film by the visible stars. Indeed, as you will learn a little later, all film stars and screen artistes owe their success to the way they are produced and directed by technicians one never sees. And so, if you have not been in the habit of studying the credit titles, I advise you to do so in the future, and with your increasing knowledge of production methods, you will be able to recognise the work of the best film-makers, for just as film stars become known by their special characteristics, so can the personal touches of the film-makers be detected once one has learnt how to look for them.

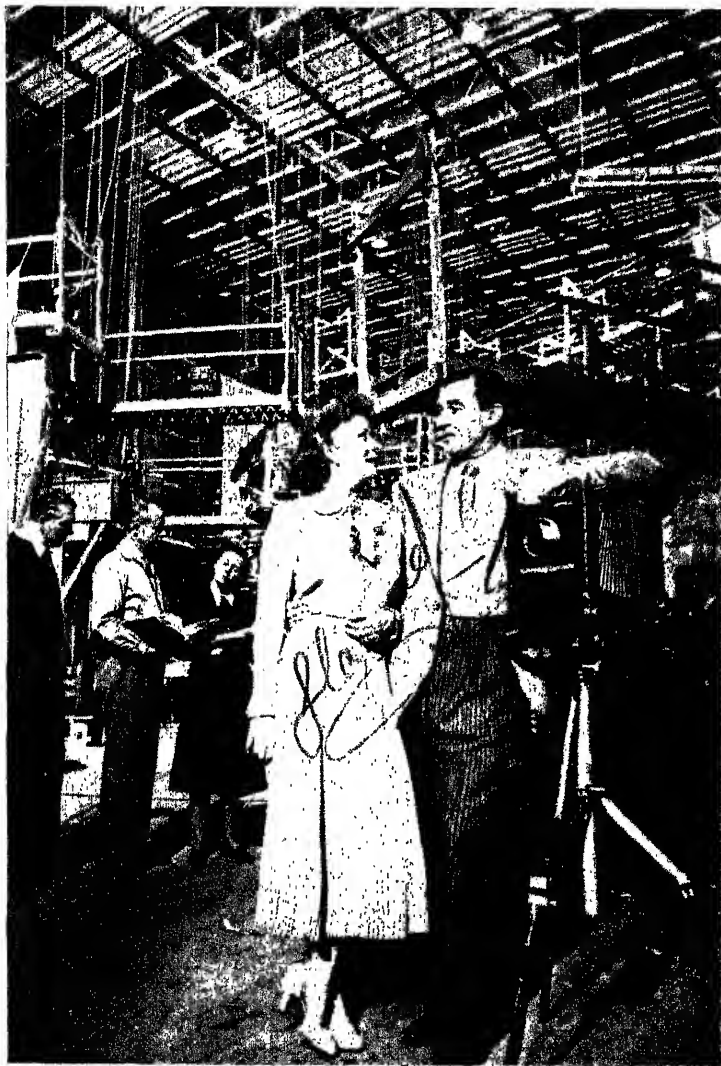
As I said earlier, a film is not the work of one person, but of many specialists, and in order that all their various con-

tributions shall be welded together into a perfect whole, they need a co-ordinating genius at the head of them. He is the Producer of the film. I will explain exactly what his duties are in due course, but it will make things clearer, I think, if I deal with each of the specialists as nearly as possible in the order in which they become active. First on the list, therefore, is the Author. Then comes the Script Writer. We will study these two to begin with, and then meet the *Director*—the *Art Director*—the *Lighting Expert*—the *Recordist*—the *Camera Operator*, and the *Editor*. They are the most important people, and they are supported by many other technicians and artists who all play special parts during production.

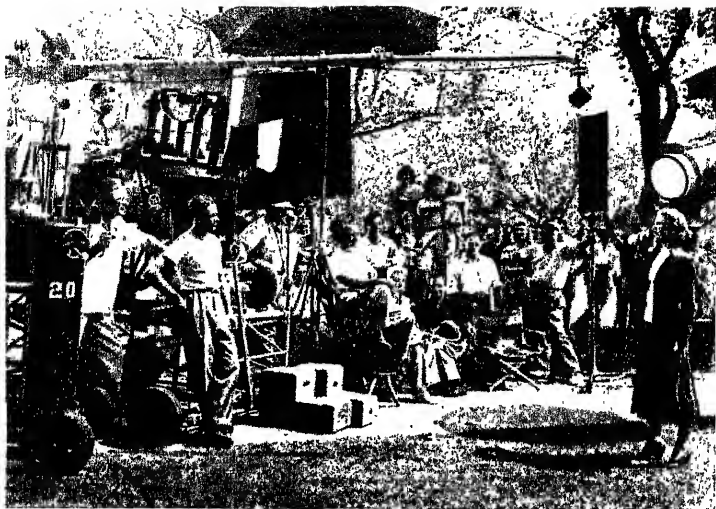
What Is a Good Film Story?

The Author of the film story is the first on the list because the story provides the foundations of the film. He may be quite unconnected with the film Studio. Perhaps he is a famous novelist or playwright, and one of his successes has been bought for adapting to the screen. When this is the case, the Author frequently has little or no connection with the making of the film, although he is usually consulted on various points, and his permission is asked to alter certain parts of the story or play to strengthen the film version.

But even though the Author may not be involved in the actual film-making beyond having supplied the story, you should always give him your fullest consideration. By that, I mean consider the story of a film, because subject-matter is or should be of first importance and, as I said earlier, should not be just a series of situations strung together to provide a vehicle for some particular star. Study the story and you will be studying the foundations of a film instead of being content with the trimmings. Now, if you do not select your films because of their stars, but because of the subjects, you will often want to see a screen adaptation of a book you have liked, or a play you have seen, or even because certain



On the set during the production of 'The Miniver Story'. Behind the stars (Walter Pidgeon and Greer Garson) the Director (Mr. H. C. Potter) is conferring with the continuity girl, who has the difficult job of remembering every detail of what has to be filmed.



Above . A team of technicians assembled on an outdoor set to shoot a scene from the technicolour musical 'Girl of the Year'. Below . A set for 'The Dancing Years' at Elstree Studios. The Director is Harold French, the producer Warwick Ward, the stars Dennis Price and Patricia Dainton.

authors are your favourites and any stories written by them would naturally attract you.

The first essential in a book or play which is to be adapted for the screen is that it should lend itself to being *illustrated* in moving pictures. Often, however, film companies buy the film rights of a best-selling novel or a big stage success simply because it *has* been a success and its name, or the name of its author, will ensure its further success on the screen. If it happens that the story is not particularly suitable for filming, then it is expanded, or altered, sometimes beyond recognition, without regard for the original subject. Readers of a book often fail to recognise it in its new film form.

But even if the Producers adhere as faithfully as they possibly can to a novel, it is really impossible for the film to convey the atmosphere created with such care by the author in hundreds of pages of prose. A film presents action, whereas a novel, however great, stripped of its descriptive writing, and its characterisation, leaves but a bare plot, and a plot alone has never made great fiction. Therefore, the film has the difficult task of conveying the atmosphere of the book solely by means of its settings, costumes, and the acting of the characters—a task which is almost impossible. There have been, and will continue to be, very fine film adaptations of books and plays, but they will be comparatively rare for the simple reason that the screen is, or should be, an independent medium of expression which should present stories and subject-matter written especially for it. If the screen is to become an independent art, like the stage or literature, it must not too often borrow material from the other arts, especially when it cannot always give faithful film versions of it.

Something the Screen Cannot Do

So make a point of studying the adapted story and, whenever possible, read the original novel to enable you to compare the two results. As I have already said, the characters

in a book come to life in the reader's imagination, helped by the novelist's descriptions of them, and so it stands to reason that any real person who appears on the screen representing a character from fiction will obviously seem different in almost every way from the reader's private portrait of him. In great novels, too, there are usually pages and pages of wonderful descriptive writing of places and characters in which no *action* occurs at all. Imagine, therefore, how impossible is the task of adapting such written matter for film presentation. It simply cannot be done.

Plays, of course, depend almost entirely upon the spoken word, and the dialogue occurs within the three walls of the stage setting. To adapt a play for the screen involves introducing numerous situations and places which will provide variety of scene and movement. But even when this has been achieved, in all probability the film will depend primarily upon the spoken word to carry the plot along. If it is the function of the stage to present and to depend upon dramatic dialogue, can it be right for the screen also to depend upon it in view of its unique ability to present moving pictures of real places, living backgrounds, so to speak, from all parts of the world? The answer, of course, is that the original film story written by someone who thinks in *visual terms*, and who is not concentrating upon writing superb prose, or on brilliant dialogue, is the most suitable screen material, though it may not bear a well-known title made familiar by a best-selling novel, or a play that has run for months.

Therefore watch carefully for the original film story, and compare its movement and pictorial values with the last adaptation you can recall. Above all, give first place to material which is presented pictorially, and notice how static are those situations in which several characters are carrying on a lengthy conversation in an interior setting which is the equivalent of the stage scene. Action, not words, is or should be the foundation of the moving picture that really moves.

The Film Begins to Take Shape

Whether a story to be filmed is from a novel, a play, or an original work, the first step in preparing it for production is to write what is known as a Treatment on it. This is a straightforward non-technical synopsis of the subject which will give a clear idea of what the film will contain. Writing the Treatment is a highly skilled job, and the writer should know exactly what to cut out of, say, a novel, or when to add new situations to give it strength. When writing his synopsis, he is seeing the completed film as a whole, and is also visualising possible stars to play the leading parts, and making sure that the situations he is describing will give them the right opportunities.

The Treatment has to be approved by all those concerned (the specialists I have already listed), and then it has to be written in Script form. The same general principles of script writing are followed by all studios, but some are considerably larger than others, and have greater technical facilities, script writers work out their scripts to suit their respective producing companies. A properly written Script is a detailed description of a film. It contains, or should contain, every conceivable detail about every scene.

That leads me to what is perhaps the most important fact a student of film-making should know—the fact that every film is composed of countless separate strips. You realised just now that merely to raise your arms above your head would occupy fifty or sixty frames on a strip of film. Imagine, therefore, how many strips are needed to create a feature film playing for an hour and a half!

Now when you are watching a film, you are probably not conscious of the fact that the scene before you is constantly changing its dimensions. At one moment you are looking at a large room in which several people are talking; suddenly, the people are much nearer to you; just as suddenly, you are

looking at only one of them in a close-up; and then the whole room reappears again. Not only are these changes going on within every scene, but entire scenes change so smoothly and swiftly that the audience is carried along unconscious of them.

If a scene was presenting, say, two characters in a large room, and there was never any change of angle, the audience would merely feel, quite unconsciously, that the situation was not very forceful; that it seemed a bit remote, and somehow or other the characters remained distant. But when that scene is presented in numerous contrasting camera angles, bringing characters very close at certain moments, moving them away at others, or emphasising dramatic points by forcing you to concentrate on one face, and eliminating everything else from your vision for a few seconds—then the audience feels it has come to grips with the drama; that it is as much a part of the situation as are the characters on the screen. But few if any members of the audience are conscious that, within the space of a few minutes, a great many different strips of film have been presented. They are all so skilfully joined together that the smoothness of the action gives the impression of one continuous piece of film.

Every time the camera changes its position, the action is classified as a separate scene, and it has its own number in the script. And every scene, whether long or short, is meaningless by itself, but is full of significance when joined in its correct place with all the others. Thus a film is made up of countless ever-changing strips. Just as you should try to isolate a film story from its trimmings, so also you should watch a film more closely than you have ever done before, and notice how often the camera angles and scenes change in a few minutes of film time. You will be amazed at the intricate construction.

How the Script-Writer Helps the Actor

What I have just been saying will have helped you to realise how much the film actors depend upon the skill of the

technicians to present them most effectively. The stage actor has no such help. He remains the same size throughout the play, and ingenious camera angles cannot help to strengthen his acting.

Of course, unless a script has been written with imagination, and contains detailed descriptions of all the scenes, the film will not only be difficult to produce, but it will reveal the weakness of the script. You will sometimes have seen a film that seems too long, or in which the story is difficult to follow. Such faults can usually be traced to a badly written script. The script-writer, therefore, needs to have a sound working knowledge of all departments in production, otherwise he would be unable to write directions for camera movements, recording, and the taking of scenes which will smoothly merge one into the other. He combines the abilities of a novelist, a playwright, a journalist, and a photographer, and he will be all the more successful if he is also a student of art and music. Writing the script for a full-length feature film may take several months, and when it is completed, it will contain details of hundreds of scenes, or changes within scenes.

Let's assume for a moment that a company has decided to produce an original story, and that the Treatment has been approved. It has been passed to the script-writer, and he is about to transform it into a final script. As I have said, the Treatment is in prose form—rather like a story in a magazine. Imagine, therefore, that the following passage occurs in the Treatment:

Gerald walks along the deserted beach, ignorant of the fact he is being followed. He pauses to admire the expanse of sea. No living soul is in sight. He stands in a lonely world of sand and rocks. Suddenly he hears a faint cry which seems to come from some castle ruins on the cliff top. He listens, but it is not repeated, and so, shrugging his shoulders, he resumes his walk. But he has only gone a few

steps when the cry is heard again, much louder. Gerald stands rooted to the ground, listening, and looking up at the ruins. Again and again the cry is heard, louder and more urgent. Gerald runs towards the cliff face, and then begins to climb up to the ruins.

That might well be a brief situation in a feature film, but it could not be filmed from such a description. It must be written into script form, perhaps like this:

Exterior : Day

SCENE 1. LONG SHOT

Camera on cliff top. Screen filled entirely by sea waves—10 feet. Camera pans slowly downwards from sea until the beach comes into view, and the figure of Gerald, dwarfed by the great expanse, is seen walking, right to left. Camera holds Gerald centre for 10 feet, and then swings to right, coming to rest on cluster of rocks behind which his follower is seen.

That is an *establishing* shot. The opening glimpse of the sea quickly plants the character of the location. By looking down on Gerald from a height, the solitary nature of the beach is emphasised. Both Gerald and his follower, and their relative positions to each other are made clear.

* * *

SCENE 2. MEDIUM CLOSE-UP

Gerald walking along the beach. Camera holds him centre.

This is a fairly near shot, showing Gerald down to his waist, to make him recognisable. The camera holds him in the centre of the screen as he walks along, by moving along with him. Otherwise, he would walk out of the picture far too quickly.

* * *

SCENE 3. CLOSE-UP

The jagged edges of rocks fill lower half of screen. Rising above them is the face of the follower. Suddenly he bobs down.

A close-up of the follower to impress his evil presence on the audience.

* * *

SCENE 4. CLOSE-UP

Gerald walks into picture and stops to admire the scenery. He turns his head to look behind him, and then slowly resumes his walk out of the picture.

This close-up follows the close-up of the follower, thus linking the two men together. Note that in this case the camera is stationary, for Gerald walks into the picture and stops, and then walks out of it. He is not walking all the time, as in Scene 2, which made it necessary for the camera to move with him.

* * *

SCENE 5. LONG SHOT

Camera on beach, set ten yards BEHIND the follower who is visible in foreground creeping forward. Gerald is visible in distance, walking onwards.

On left of screen, from this angle, the cliff face surmounted by the castle ruins is visible.

A cry is heard. Gerald stops to listen. Follower crouches low.

This long shot presents the action from the follower's viewpoint, and also introduces the cliff and the castle ruins. It is wise to introduce such scenic features gradually, when possible, instead of attempting to reveal them all in an opening shot.

* * *

SCENE 6. CLOSE-UP

Gerald listening. As cry is not repeated, he shrugs his shoulders and walks out of picture.

SCENE 7. CLOSE-UP

Crouching feet only of the follower. He slowly advances.

These two close-ups keep up the suspense of the action,

and by showing only the feet of the follower, his sinister presence is further emphasised.

* * *

SCENE 8. LONG SHOT

Camera AHEAD of Gerald, who is walking towards it. Follower visible in background. Cliff and ruins visible in right of picture. The cry is now heard much louder, and is repeated. Both men stop.

This is a reverse angle, and brings both characters facing the camera. Thus we have seen their journey from behind and in front, as well as, in the first scene, from above.

* * *

SCENE 9. MEDIUM CLOSE-UP

Gerald, listening and looking up at ruins (out of camera) as cries are repeated. He runs out of picture.

This waist-length close-up registers Gerald's concern as he listens to the cries. He runs out of picture, and

* * *

SCENE 10. LONG SHOT

Camera on cliff top. Gerald seen below running towards cliff. Follower directly behind him, watching from side of rocks. He, too, moves forward in direction of cliff. Cries accompany the action.

By looking down from the cliff top again, the height of the cliff is emphasised, and the difficult task of climbing up to the ruins is registered.

* * *

SCENE 11. MEDIUM SHOT

Camera on beach looking directly at base of cliff. Gerald running and reaching cliff, which he begins to climb.

It is important to note how this scene and scene 10 will be joined. Assume that in the former, when the camera was looking down on Gerald, he had come to within, say, thirty yards of the base of the cliff. That being so, when he is seen in scene 11, he must be approximately the same distance from the cliff. It would not do if, in scene 11, he was only about three yards from it. This example of the need for accurate continuity during changes of camera angles applies to all film-making. The end of one scene must always show action which is being carried on in an identical way at the beginning of the scene which immediately follows it, assuming, of course, it is meant to follow. Now it might be that the script-writer would decide to *divide* scenes 10 and 11 by inserting an isolated close-up of the mysterious follower moving forward. It would be quite in order to do so, but it would also remove the need to match the action of Gerald's position at the end of scene 10 with his position at the beginning of scene 11, for once the attention of the audience is removed from any fragment of action, even for a few moments, that action can have advanced considerably by the next time it is seen. Consequently, if Gerald had been thirty yards from the cliff base in scene 10, and then we had a glimpse of the follower, which would thus be scene 11, by the time we came to scene 12, Gerald could have run to within, say, ten yards of the cliff base. The glimpse of the follower would be known as a cut-in shot.

* * *

SCENE 12. CLOSE-UP

Jagged face of cliff. Slowly, Gerald's hands rise into picture, feeling for rocks to grip, as he levers himself upwards.

SCENE 13. MEDIUM SHOT

Camera beach level. Facing cliff, but slightly to the left. Gerald is now several feet up, and climbing steadily. Follower is running forward towards cliff, knowing that Gerald cannot see him as he climbs. The cries continue.

SCENE 14. SIX INCH LENS. CLOSE-UP

Camera on cliff top tilted to cover Gerald as he climbs upwards. Shot is held until follower appears at cliff base looking up at Gerald.

A six-inch lens is used to bring distant objects near (rather as field glasses do), and the only way in which a good close-up of Gerald climbing upwards could be obtained would be with such a lens, from the cliff top.

You see, therefore, that at least fourteen separate scenes, camera changes, or 'set-ups' are needed to present, in film form, the brief episode we first studied in simple prose. Probably the whole action, from when Gerald was first seen walking to when we leave him climbing the cliff, would not take more than four minutes to show on the screen, perhaps less. Since film runs at ninety feet per minute, about 360 feet would be needed for this short episode. The length of a full-length feature film varies from about 5,000 feet to 15,000 feet, and so you will be able to judge the detail involved in a complete script when fourteen scenes are needed to present just one tiny episode.

But you would not, or should not, be *conscious* of those fourteen changes on the screen. Instead, you would be concentrating upon one man following another man along a lonely beach, and watching the first one running to rescue someone crying for help. You would be watching this from all possible angles, sometimes near to the men, at others far from them, and the scenery would be presented to you in such a way that you would be familiar with its significant features in the briefest possible time. The sequence would move smoothly and swiftly, which is the art of good filmmaking. If it were poorly made, and the positions of the two men were constantly changing so that sometimes they were much nearer to each other than at others, or if Gerald began to climb the cliff in one shot, and in the next you saw him

nearly at the top, you would be conscious of the mistake. But when scenes are assembled correctly then, as far as you are concerned, you are watching one roll of film which presents action continuously.

Before we leave the subject of scripts, I will describe how a scene containing dialogue is written, for there was no talking in the scenes I have just described.

Imagine two men having an argument at a café table. Their names are Green and Brown, and they sit opposite to each other.

* * *

SCENE 1. MEDIUM SHOT

Green and Brown at table in centre. Green is thumping the table and saying: 'You'd better keep out of it!' Brown, bewildered, raises his eyebrows and asks: 'Why?'

SCENE 2. CLOSE-UP

Green, semi-profile, glaring at Brown who is out of picture: 'Because you'll make a mess of it, and lose everything. That's why!'

SCENE 3. CLOSE-UP

Brown, semi-profile, looking at Green who is out of picture. 'I'm not a fool. I can look after myself.'

SCENE 4. CLOSE-UP

Green, full face, glaring at Brown who is out of picture: 'That's just it. You don't know yourself. You think you're (intercut reaction halfway. 4a) clever, and yet they all get the better of you, and you'll land us all in the cart—that's what you'll do!'

(SCENE 4a. CLOSE-UP Mute

Large close-up of Brown's face staring at Green who is out of picture. He is swallowing hard, and trying to get a word in, but Green's voice is continuous.)

This silent study of Brown listening is cut into the middle of Green's close-up, Scene 4. About 4 or 5 feet of Green's close-up would be cut out, and in its place the close-up of Brown would be inserted.

* * *

Well, briefly and simply, the above examples show the general principle of script writing, but above all else they emphasise how every film consists of numerous related strips. A complete film script is an orderly document, with every scene in its correct place, from No. 1 to, perhaps, No. 465.

The Story Cannot Be Filmed in Order

However, the scenes *cannot* be filmed in their correct order for a very simple reason. Any scene in any film is likely to reappear at irregular intervals again and again, according to the story. A particular room, for instance, might reappear forty times during the action, divided, of course, by countless other scenes. Now to film all the scenes in their correct script or story order would involve building that particular set, and leaving it standing ready for whenever it was wanted the next time. And if this method were adopted for all the sets demanded by the story, there would be no studio in the whole world big enough to hold them until they were finished with. Instead, each set is built separately, and all the action which is to take place in it is filmed, although the sequences may be widely separated in the finished film. After that the set is pulled down to make room for the next one. It might well happen that *scenes* 1, 10, 42, 88, 156, 203, and 380, all of which occur in *one set*, are filmed on consecutive days, so that the set is finished with. Similarly, all interiors are filmed together, and then all exteriors are filmed.

A man might be filmed in the hall of a house, opening the front door and going out (that would be filmed in the studio,

of course), whereas the scene *immediately following*, showing the man shutting the front door behind him and walking away down the street (which would be filmed in a real street) might not be taken until several weeks later.

This necessity for filming scenes according to studio building requirements, and completing all action in one scene before proceeding to the next, means that the script as it first stands is not a sufficiently clear guide to production. It would be useless to have to search constantly through its pages to find out which scenes have to be taken in, say, the drawing-room, or in the cathedral. And so, before actual filming, the script is 'broken down' into scenes. That is, a shooting script version is prepared by extracting all the scenes which are to be played in each particular setting or location, and grouping them together. Thus, there might be a folder labelled 'Vicarage Drawing Room,' Scenes 4, 10, 11, 12, 29, 42, 43, 44, 65, 78, 92, 93, 120, 140. There would be similar folders for each of the main scenes.

That hall leading to the front door which I mentioned just now might quite well appear several times throughout the film, and so might the *exterior* of the house. Therefore, although the inside of the front door opening, and the outside of it shutting, follow each other in a second, they would not be filmed in that order. Incidentally, think how easy it would be for the man who opens the front door, whilst in the *studio* scene of the hall, to be wearing a spotted tie, and to be wearing a striped one on the day he is seen shutting the door behind him, for remember, it might be weeks or even months before he is filmed leaving the house in the exterior shot. But there are special experts watching for such mistakes, and it is only rarely they happen.

Now we'll leave the script, and meet the team of specialists who start work only when it has been completed.

3

THE 'BIG PICTURE'

IMMEDIATELY A FILM SCRIPT HAS BEEN COMPLETED A SERIES OF production conferences is arranged to discuss the subject from every aspect.

The conferences are attended by all the technical chiefs who will be jointly responsible for making the film. Therefore, the first conference will give us a good opportunity to meet them, and learn of their respective duties. In the last chapter I mentioned that the presiding genius who co-ordinates the efforts of all the others is the Producer, and I expect you have sometimes been confused when you have read on the titles that a film is *Produced by* Mr. So-and-So, and *Directed by* Mr. Somebody Else. Can a Producer direct a film, or can a Director produce one, and what's the difference anyway?

The Man at the Top: the Producer

There's all the difference in the world. A film company rarely if ever concentrates upon one film at a time. Usually it has several in production simultaneously, in various stages of completion. Maybe there are as many as six or seven in the script stage, two or three being planned and cast, and perhaps two or more in actual production, according to the size of the studio. Consequently, everything must be organised most carefully to prevent overlapping, and to ensure that as one production ceases to occupy the floors of the studio, another is ready to take its place at once. A constant flow of films is essential to prevent a large staff of technicians standing idle, and also to keep down the general running costs of the whole studio. Now the man in charge of *all* pro-

duction is the Producer. He is responsible, not only for the output, but for the success of every film, and it is his personality, creative genius and vision which inspire those he appoints actually to make the films he controls.

Conditions vary in different studios, of course, but frequently it is the Producer who selects subjects for filming, or has a big say in their selection, which means that from the start he has to visualise a subject, and be able to decide on its suitability and value.

He must be a man with experience of all the different kinds of technical work he controls to enable him to criticise, in a constructive way, the production results which he views at every stage. Assume, therefore, that a studio has on hand six feature films at once. *Each* of them is being *directed* by a specially appointed Director who is responsible to the Producer.

The Invisible Star: the Director

Now you can see the difference between producing and directing. The Producer is visualising and controlling the progress of, say, six films, whilst the Director of *each one* of them is actually directing operations on the studio floor. Maybe a Producer would not appear in the studio at all, or at least it would not be essential for him to visit it, but the Director is there all the time, of course, for he is responsible for bringing the script to life. All the players are entirely in his hands, and the strength or weakness of a performance can usually be traced to the Director. Have you sometimes noticed how a star appealed to you enormously in one picture and in another seemed to lack appeal, even though the story was as good as the first one, or perhaps better?

Now, if you had no knowledge of how films are made, you might well think that this was due entirely to the star—that he or she was off-colour, or not interested in the subject. That is entirely wrong, of course, the real reason being that

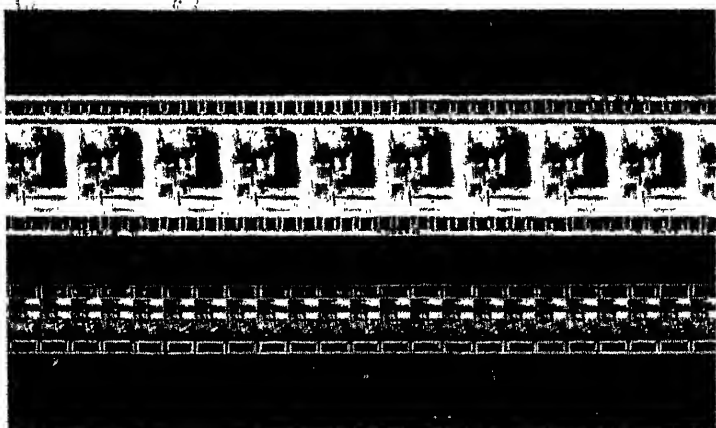
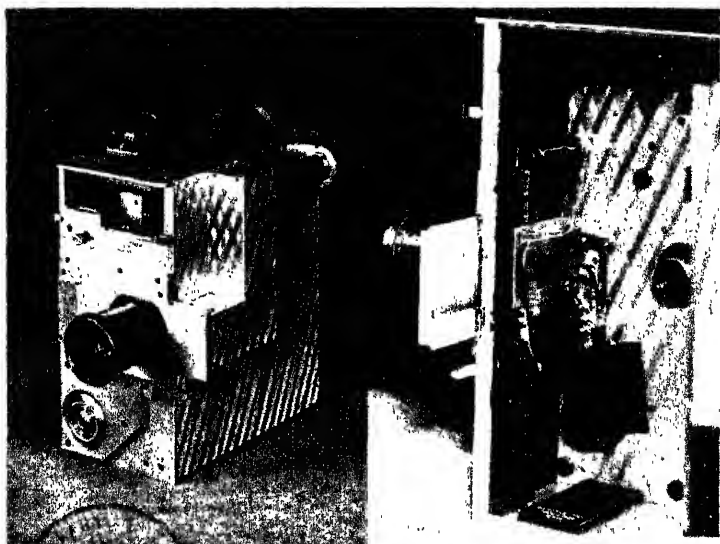
one Director can often handle a star better than another. This fact becomes clearer if you try to imagine the Director—as a musician, and that the stars, and all the other characters are the *instruments* upon which he plays, for that is what they are. *He plays upon their emotions.* He may work them up into hysteria, harden them to the point of indifference, make them gay or grave, sad or mad. *The Director is the invisible star of the picture*, and the visible players are speaking and moving according to his instructions. A first-class Director can play *every part* and, in rehearsals, often does. He will run through the lines and mimic the characters, and then the stars and others will do likewise. But there is give and take in it all. Sometimes the actor will suggest a way of delivering a line which is an improvement on the Director's idea, and if it is obviously better, it will be adopted.

But all this should not lead you to think that the acting abilities of the players count for little. On the contrary, their acting is the power which makes or mars the film, but it is the Director who *makes the most of their ability*.

You will remember I described how scenes are filmed out of order, for technical and building reasons. Now on the real stage, actors can build up their parts with increasing dramatic intensity as the play proceeds because, of course, a play is presented continuously from start to finish, but screen players are called upon to act isolated sequences without any regard to the order in which those sequences will appear in the finished film. How, then, can they possibly build up their parts, for their acting is neither continuous, nor even in logical story order? The answer is that the Director does the building up for them. He is always visualising the film *as a whole*, and whilst directing one scene he is seeing it in relation to the others. Thus he is justified in instructing the players just how to speak or move, and by his personality he obtains from them the emotional acting needed to illustrate each particular fragment of action.



Above • A cold night's work on the Liverpool landing-stage. Michael Anderson, the director (in the trilby) rehearses Susan Shaw and Kenneth Griffith, sitting in the car. Below • 6,000 miles away from their studios at Pinewood, a film unit making 'South Africa Story' on the spot.



Top left • A Newman-Sinclair portable camera. Right • Interior of camera showing gate through which film passes. Below • A strip of 35 mm. film (with sound track running beside the 'frames') compared with 16 mm. film.

The stars of a film naturally study the script and know exactly the nature of the story and the characters they are each representing, but many of the smaller parts are filled by people who may not have the slightest idea of what the film is about. They are merely engaged for a few days, and appear in sequences as instructed; they cannot tell from the action in which they take part what the story is all about.

Here is a further illustration of the difficulties facing film players. Imagine a story in which a man is to be married in a large church very early in the film, and that his wife dies at the end of the film, and the burial service takes place in the same church. Now in order to complete all scenes in the church setting to enable it to be pulled down to make room for the next scene, the star will have to appear as a bridegroom one day, and as a widower the next. After that he will have to play in another scene which shows him and his wife returning from their honeymoon! He has no chance therefore, to *build up* character in the stage sense, but has to rely upon the ability of the Director to mould him for each scene as it is acted. Incidentally, the person who acts as a shadow to the Director is the *Continuity Girl*—a most competent person with an uncanny memory and a faculty for observing every little detail about everything and everybody. It is she who will notice, for instance, that a woman walks out of a room with her hair parted on the side, and so will prevent her being seen in the next scene, which might be taken three months later, with a centre parting.

The successful Director should have as many artistic qualifications as possible, a strong but extremely sympathetic nature, a sensitive disposition, and wide experience of people of all classes.

Now although the Producer is responsible for a film, he gives his Director full play. He knows how unwise it would be to try to curb him, for the good Director makes a production a *personal* creation, and introduces into it numerous

little touches which build up the whole. The shape of a room, shadows, curtains, the positions of the people, how they walk, or talk, the furniture—all these factors will give sudden ideas to the Director of which he will take advantage *on the spot*. Additional close-ups of, say, nervous fingers tapping on a table; the reflection of eyes in the polished surface of a cigarette case; the mysterious appearance of curtains moving in a breeze; the dramatic effect of a sudden silence in the dialogue; the sound of the rain outside, of footsteps heard in the distance. These are little points which may not and, indeed, often cannot be described in the script, but which become apparent during actual production.

We are going to study editing and cutting last of all, but I should mention at this juncture that the good Director makes his scenes with one eye always on the editing. He plans that his sequences shall merge, and he directs the action of each scene at a tempo which he knows *must govern the general timing of the whole film*.

Quick or Slow Action? The Director Decides

Action should be played fast or slow for some dramatic purpose. If played at normal speed, then the Director must be sure that the sequence as a whole is not too long. One sequence affects another. Well-acted and well-directed sequences which, *collectively*, create a slow-moving film will not succeed. *Interest must be maintained throughout*. A film must arrest the attention at the beginning, work upwards to a middle crisis, and then upwards again to a final climax which must be greater than anything which has preceded it. The script-writer will have planned this on paper, but the Director must carry it through and, where necessary, shorten some sequences, or play them at maximum speed, or reduce to a minimum unnecessary wanderings of characters which seemed logical on paper, but weak and slow when acted.

The rate of speaking is of first importance, too. If permit-

ted, the players might speak too slowly. The Director sets the tempo for them, and plans dialogue sequences so that he can cut from one character, or group, or scene, to another, sharply.

Just as I have suggested that you should study very closely the actual stories, how the sequences are constructed, and also how the countless strips which constitute a film are assembled, and observe how even the simplest piece of action is divided up into numerous contrasting angles to make the situation more clear, so I now add another factor for you to study—the *personality of the Director*. Pick out the finest Directors and follow their work. Keep a list of these invisible stars. They are the men who have brought fame to the visible ones.

Consider Alfred Hitchcock, who has repeated his English successes in Hollywood. You cannot mistake his films, which are knitted together with all the care of a master craftsman. Hitchcock is really more than a Director. He writes (or used to when he was producing in Britain, and I expect he still does) his own scripts. Every detail goes into them, together with sketches and drawings of all the people and places involved. In fact, once he has written his script, he has literally made the picture. The work of directing it in the studio is not, I imagine, quite so interesting to him as *creating* the film on paper.

He is unusually ingenious. He will trick the audience with skilful little situations which lead them up the wrong path. He can make the most fantastic situations seem realistic because his touch is sure, and because he is able to inspire everyone with confidence. He will *begin* his films in a startling fashion. Someone will shriek. A collision will occur. A shot will be fired. Your attention is gripped and you want to find out the reason for these happenings. He will confront you with comic interludes, as, for instance, in *Stage Fright* (1950), and when your laughter is loudest, he will, without warning, send a shiver down your spine.

He knows the ways of ordinary people. He does not believe in trying to glorify outwardly people and things which are.

not glamorous. He hates snobbery. If his villain should eat his supper out of a newspaper on a dirty table, he won't film him using a plate on a clean table. And he has an uncanny way of making stars really human. He makes you *believe in his films*. That proves he is a great Director.

Watch, too, the work of Anthony Asquith, who directed the extremely fine *Way to the Stars*. Asquith is entirely different from Hitchcock, but he is a brilliant technician, with a vivid personality, which is reflected in all his films. He understands people and why they do things, and he introduces a poetic quality into his situations, without making them unreal. He is an artist and groups his people and times his effects perfectly but never artificially. He manages to imbue his films with the delicacy and gaiety of the French. Study Asquith's work closely, and see one of his films *more than once* to enable you to observe the construction of his sequences, and how he creates dramatic effects by contrasting scenes and also how he relies a great deal on photographic effects, and on making the settings and the characters a part of each other.

Look for Michael Anderson, the Director who made *The Dam Busters* so skilfully. Although he had been making films for several years this young Director leapt into the front rank with this production, which owed some of its success to a good story from which an excellent script was written.

Then there are the gifted Boulting Brothers, inseparable twins, who direct together. Their subjects are always interesting. Perhaps you saw *Seven Days to Noon*. This exciting film gave evidence of the Boulting Brothers' sense of drama, and their ability to use film with great skill. This seemingly impossible story of a scientist who invents a bomb capable of blowing up half London, and informs the Prime Minister that he will use it to obliterate the Houses of Parliament and all surrounding localities if he does not obtain the government's agreement to stop making atomic bombs, is handled so cleverly it becomes real. The title means that the Prime

Minister has seven days' warning, and that at noon on the seventh day the scientist will carry out his threat if atomic bombs have not been banished. The tension built up towards the end is an example of expert directing. London has been evacuated. The scientist has disappeared, and a highly organized search for him is in progress. It is the seventh day, and the clock is ticking relentlessly towards noon. Will they find him in time? Will half London be blown skywards as the clock strikes twelve? I advise you to study the film and note how the suspense is created.

Entirely different is the work of the French Director Maurice Cloche, who made the inspiring film *Monsieur Vincent* which faithfully recounts the story of the saintly priest, Vincent du Paul, in the middle of the seventeenth century; how he revived religion in a plague-ridden, pleasure drunk town, and how he struggled to establish the first hospital in Paris. This is an admirable example of the historical film, and thanks to fine co-operation between Director Maurice Cloche and Actor Pierre Fresnay, who plays the part of Monsieur Vincent, the period comes to life.

You should also look for further work from the Italian Director Vittorio De Sica, who, in 1949, made *Bicycle Thieves*, a very simple and moving story set in an Italian village. This film cost only a small sum to make, and all the parts except one are played so naturally that we do not believe anyone is acting at all, but just being themselves. This film has been acclaimed as a great example of screen art, which goes to show that film stars are not essential, and that success does not depend upon spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on making a film.

One of Britain's most eminent Producers is Sir Michael Balcon, who controls Ealing Films. He possesses a fine, sensitive driving force, and several clever writers and Directors owe their success to his inspiring help. Although his output varies considerably, ranging from Victorian backgrounds,

whether in Australia or Africa, to the bombed sites of London, one can almost tell a film for which he has been responsible. He achieves maximum results without extravagant and spectacular methods. His *Passport to Pimlico* ranks as one of the best comedies to emerge from a British studio, and *The Cruel Sea* is a fine example of blending fact and fiction. Directed by Charles Frend, it tells the story of wartime convoys in the Atlantic, and the actors become real people to us. If you have seen this film you will remember the wonderfully convincing scenes at sea—an example of realism achieved by first-class direction and expert editing.

What the Art Director Does

Now we come to the Art Director. He attends all conferences during the planning of a production. His is a difficult job, for not only has he to design all the settings, but to plan the order in which they can be built most quickly, and in such a manner that as one set is finished with, another will be ready. The Art Director is head of the Art Department, which is staffed by expert draughtsmen who draw the building plans from his designs, and by the property experts whose job it is to equip each set down to the last detail with appropriate furnishings. The furnishings are hired from firms specialising in huge stocks of every kind of furniture.

The people in the Art Department must be experts in period decoration, and when an historical picture is being planned their work becomes a vast undertaking. They have to make sure that everything from mirrors and curtains down to footstools and inkstands are of exactly the right period. Some stories or subjects demand very special settings with unusual features, which are broadly described in the script, but have to be planned in detail by the Director and the Art Director. Although designing a setting is the Art Director's responsibility, he has to follow the wishes of the Director, if he has special requirements. Sometimes the Director will have a lot to say about every setting.

Fantastic stories such as science fiction films, or big musical productions such as *Oklahoma!* make maximum demands upon the Art Department. Moon landscapes—unearthly stretches of lifeless plain and similar weird scenes are, of course, the *creations* of the Art Director's mind, inspired by the script and the character of the story. Extravagantly fantastic settings such as those in *An American in Paris*—the fountain ballet, for instance, and those vast scenes with shining floors, gigantic archways, staircases of mirrors, huge picture frames in which dancers are grouped, and all that kind of thing, are specially designed by teams of experts consisting of, in addition to the Art Department, the *Director*, *Cameramen* and *Recordist*. Perhaps, when Gene Kelly or a similar dancing star is to be featured, he might also be asked for his opinion regarding floor dimensions. These enormous and over-luxurious settings are usually built to occupy entire studio floors.

You should study all settings with as much attention as you can spare when following a film. Far more depends upon them than many people imagine. They help to establish a film's character. They play *a part of their own*. Even quite ordinary settings of everyday drawing-rooms, newspaper offices, banks, shops, are carefully planned to be not only exact but unobtrusive. They never dominate the screen except with a purpose, but they frame the characters and add to their naturalness and the general realism of the story.

Cobwebs or Flowers: the Art Director Decides

Take a look at the settings, and see the skilful way in which luxury or poverty, carelessness or efficiency, happiness or misery, or a sinister atmosphere are conveyed to you by the details: books which look as if they have not been taken out of their shelves for years; draggled curtains; old-fashioned wallpaper; unwashed crockery; ugly ornaments; or, on the other hand, fine mirrors and pictures on the walls; settees •

into which people sink luxuriously; handsome well-filled cigarette boxes and decanters; beautifully arranged flowers; perfectly placed antique furniture, the piles of papers in files on the desks of newspaper offices; the countless little articles arrayed so naturally on the counters and shelves of, say, a village general stores, or, at the other extreme, in a vast London shop; artificially spun cobwebs in musty old rooms; fine oak panelling and heavy carved doors in baronial homes; these are all details assembled to create just the right atmosphere and they are the result of very hard work by the Art department. Not only must every piece of paper, every chair, and every picture be exactly right, and belong to the period in which the story is set, but all the articles in a setting must, of course, appear to be there *permanently*. They must look like real things in real rooms which are really lived in.

While exteriors do not require designers and builders (although sets are sometimes built in the open air), every location, whether it be a street, a stretch of common, a village, or a harbour, has to be most carefully selected by location finders attached to the Art Department.

The Lighting Expert Has a Tough Job

The Lighting expert, or Lighting Cameraman, is the man with the heavy responsibility of lighting characters and settings. Bad lighting can add years to the apparent age of a star, and can ruin a film. Before a production, camera tests are given to all the leading players, in full make-up, and records taken of the lighting used in each test. The lighting formula which gives the best results is followed as far as possible throughout the film. A Lighting Cameraman has usually graduated from camera operating, and before that from being a camera or focus boy.

He is not greatly interested in the story, but concentrates on obtaining the finest photographic results in each of the settings he is called upon to light. He cannot start his job

until a setting has been built. He is then told what action is going to take place, and he arranges his lights accordingly.

As you probably know, it takes quite a long time for a star or indeed for any player, to be lit, and so stand-ins are employed who sufficiently resemble the players in height and colouring, and these stand or sit whilst the lights are adjusted round them. There must be no *shadows* in a setting, of course, except where they might naturally appear when created by sunlight through a window, or from a lamp which is visible. The elimination of shadows is tricky because so many lamps are employed to light a setting. In addition to those which stand on the floor there are batteries of enormously powerful lamps lined round the top of the three walls of a setting, shining downwards. Some of these are bound to cast shadows on the walls, and so when light adjustment begins on someone standing, say, in the centre of a room, there might appear two or three shadows of that person on the wall behind her. More lights are switched on to counteract such shadows, and it is only by patience that all unwanted shadows can be removed, each cancelling the other out.

I can hardly impress upon you sufficiently the importance of lighting. It is something which the Director is bound to leave entirely in the hands of the lighting expert. An experienced Director, of course, has a full knowledge of lighting, but he will not interfere, for he has or should have full confidence in the expert on the job. The time schedule for a film is governed, to a large extent, by the time needed to light each player, set, or fragment of action, for until it is just right the production cannot proceed.

Lights Must Follow the Stars

It may not have occurred to you how difficult it is to light an entire room *evenly*, and also all the characters appearing in it. Imagine a beautiful star as a central figure and several other people nearby. That star must be lit to perfection, and so

the lights are most carefully arranged. But the action may make it necessary for her to rush all round the room. Now she must not rush *out of the lights* which have been so carefully arranged for her first motionless position. It would be dreadful if, when she moved, you noticed that she was less brilliantly lit, especially if the action is supposed to be occurring in broad daylight, for daylight distributes itself evenly so that unless one walks deliberately into the shadow of a doorway or a corner, one would remain evenly lit. And so tests have to be made by moving the stand-in to different positions, about a yard apart, in all the directions which the star will move when she rushes about, and the lighting is checked at each position. It will then probably be found that whilst the general overhead lighting remains stationary, some of the floor lights will have to be swivelled round so that they will follow the star and keep her within their rays wherever she may move.

An artistic lighting expert can contribute a great deal to dramatic effects—by soft lighting, by isolated lights in weird settings, filtering through doors, casting shadows *intentionally*, creating moonlit effects, and so on. In films of fantasy he can let himself go, being under no obligation to present realistic lighting.

An Invisible Listener: the Microphone and its Master

The Recordist has an equally big responsibility for he, too, can make or mar a film by poor recording. Every word and every *intentional* sound must be faithfully recorded. To achieve this, the microphone must be very skilfully placed. It must be *invisible* to the picture camera, of course, and it must not cast a shadow on the wall, which it often does at first because the top lights throw their rays downwards and as the microphone hangs in mid-air it usually intercepts the rays of one of the lamps.

* The microphone is swung into the set on a boom which is

a big pedestal with a long protruding arm like a slender crane. This arm is controlled by a handle and can be moved outwards or inwards, upwards or downwards, and the microphone itself can also be turned left or right. By this means it can be kept hovering over each of the characters *as they speak*, and if two are holding a conversation, one on each side of the scene, it would be turned swiftly in the direction of each person as he or she spoke. Microphone manipulation is a skilled job and is done by a boom assistant, who is a member of the Recording Department.

All scenes are rehearsed several times before they are taken, of course, and each rehearsal gives opportunities for both the lighting man and the recorder to check photographic and oral results. Sometimes in a very large set it is extremely difficult to conceal the microphone, for if it is lifted up too high it will not capture voices so clearly, and then the action and the position of the characters may have to be changed solely to accommodate the microphone. This would result in the lighting having to be altered to some extent, at the last moment. I mention this to emphasise how the *several different technical departments* each demand absolutely perfect conditions to enable them to obtain the finest results. Usually all the teams work closely together, and there is fine co-operation between them, for they all have one aim—to make a first-class film.

The Man with the Camera

The Camera Operator is under the direct instructions of the Lighting expert, and is responsible for framing up each scene. He has an assistant, perhaps two, responsible for loading the camera with film, seeing that the right lens is being used, and for switching the camera motor on and off. The Operator is responsible for all *camera movement*, which is considerable, even though you may not be conscious of it, when watching a film. Indeed the finer the camerawork and move-

ment, the less conscious you should be of it when you are watching the film, though it will register in your mind, and afterwards you will realise how much it added to your enjoyment. If a star has to be kept in the picture wherever she moves, left, right, backwards or forwards, then rehearsals, especially for the camera, are needed. The operator watches the action through the eyepiece and moves the camera smoothly to keep the star or group of people in the centre. Simultaneously, the man in charge of the focus has to change the focus of the lens as the players move. If, for instance, a person is eight feet from the camera, and then moves to the left *and forwards* ending perhaps five feet from the camera, each position has to be checked and measured by tape, and the focus changes noted. Changing focus may involve twisting the lens a fraction of an inch or more, but whichever is the case, it must be done *smoothly* so that the change will not be apparent on the screen.

You have noticed how sometimes a camera embraces the whole of a room and then it moves forward until it comes to rest on perhaps just one figure. That is called tracking, and the camera is mounted on rails. The rubber wheels of the truck upon which it stands move silently along the rails as the camera is pushed forward. The speed of the journey has to be decided upon and rehearsed until it is exactly right, and the focus changes have to be perfect. Maybe such a tracking shot would be 30 feet long. To keep the character, or characters in focus all the time, the operator would watch through the eyepiece as the camera moved forward, and as he saw the scene going out of focus he would halt the camera, the focus would be checked and changed, and the spot marked in chalk on the rails. There might be four or five focus changes during the journey. Such a scene would be taken several times to get the focus perfect.

Swinging the camera from side to side, and up and down, is called 'panning.' If this is done too quickly or too slowly, or jerkily, it can ruin a scene in which everything else (acting,

lighting, sound) is perfect. Similarly, everything but the sound might be perfect.

Rehearsals, therefore, are held not only for *acting* and *general direction*, but to check *lighting*, *sound*, *camera movement*, and *focus*. All these absolutely distinct operations must be right, and all co-ordinated before a scene is taken.

The Man Who 'Puts the Film Together': the Editor

Lastly, we come to the Editor who, with his staff of cutters, arranges all the strips or scenes into a continuous whole—a most responsible job.

Now you will have noticed that each time I have introduced a technical expert and the department he controls, I have repeated the statement that he carries a very large responsibility, and that his work can make or mar a film. It would be foolish to try to find out which technician carries the *greatest* responsibility, or whose work is the most difficult, for each branch is totally different, even though it is so very closely related to all the others. It can best be summed up by saying that each of them, Script-writer, Director, Art Director, Lighting Cameraman, Operator, Recordist, and Editor, share equally in the making of a film, although the Director and the Producer who are in charge are responsible for the film as a whole.

But the Editor, removed from the studio floor, and tucked away in his cutting room, is in rather a different position, for he receives the work of all the others, and by the time it reaches him, all technical contributions have been merged together on to the film. It is then up to the Editor to create order out of, not chaos, but hundreds of scenes which have been filmed without regard to the story sequence, and which might easily become chaos unless handled in a most systematic manner.

Come into a cutting room, and see what it is like, and how a film is assembled.

It looks like a cross between a chemical laboratory and a workshop. It has fine large windows, and long benches of thick teak, in which are frosted glass panels with electric lights beneath. The film is wound to and fro over these lighted panels, on rewinders, when it is being examined or joined.

There are several large bins of a cardboard composition, each lined with clean white linen, to prevent the film being scratched when it is unrolled into them, and behind the benches are long lines of pins or thin headless nails upon which the various strips of film will be hung as they are separated and sorted. Behind these racks will be more frosted glass lit from the back so that the lengths of film can be easily identified.

A Kind of Ciné Peep Show

Another important object in the room is an American Movieola, or its English equivalent, an Editola. This is really a miniature cinema for manipulating a film in its editing stage—that is, whilst the picture and the sound track are separate. Both films are loaded on spools, and the machine is driven by electricity, and controlled either by a foot pedal or a handle. The beauty of it is that the film can be seen and heard normally, or it can be run backwards, and then forwards once more, whenever a scene has to be studied several times, or it can be stopped at any frame. The size of the picture for viewing is only a few inches long, but it is very clear.

Every day the Editor receives the rushes, and the earlier the better, for all those working on the studio floor want to see the previous day's work as quickly as possible.

You will remember I mentioned how clappers are held in front of every scene taken so that the bang registered on both cameras enables the visual film and its corresponding sound track to be synchronised? Well, that clapper board also bears the number of the scene being filmed, and the number of the *take* of that scene, for most scenes are taken several times. The first job in the cutting room, therefore, is to synchronise

the rushes for projecting, and the clapper board inserts at the commencement of each scene are left on for identification purposes. They are cut off later when assembling begins. *All* takes are included, and the Editor joins the Producer, Director, Cameramen and Recordist to see the results on the screen.

— When that has been done, the cutting room staff separates all the scenes. Assembling cannot begin during the early days of a production because as the scenes are being filmed out of order, no continuous action can be created until the majority of the other scenes have arrived. But the selection of the *best takes* of several can begin, and usually the Editor makes the selection himself.

A Conundrum for the Editor

Now the mere assembling of scenes in their right numerical and story order according to the script is not the most difficult of jobs, particularly if the Director has done his work well, and made sure that the action at the end of each of his scenes will lead smoothly into the action at the beginning of those which follow. He should have done so, of course, but for numerous reasons the Editor may find that a scene simply will not match up with what comes next. What does he do?

At the end of the last chapter, you will recall that I gave a brief example of how a conversation is written in script form, and you noticed, I expect, that I introduced a 'reaction' shot. Whilst one man was talking at full speed, the other fellow's face was inserted, listening and trying to speak. Now that reaction shot *was silent*, of course, and it just appeared for a moment and disappeared, whilst the talker went on continuously. The reaction, or cut-away shot, is invaluable, not only for bridging awkward gaps, but for inserting between two scenes which do not join smoothly. You'll see in a moment how this helps the Editor to join two scenes which do not each end and begin with action which will create continuity.

Imagine any room anywhere with five people in it. Some-

one is talking. Someone else replies. *But what about the other three?* They are listening all the time. They are silent, but *they are playing a part in that conversation just by listening.* And so it would be quite justifiable, and equally interesting, to include close-ups of the listeners in addition to the two talkers. The listeners, being silent, *can be inserted almost anywhere in the sequence*, providing the shots of them *exclude* either of the talkers. This being so, if for instance *both* the talkers are *sitting down* at the end of one shot and, because of a director's blunder, one of them is *standing up* at the beginning of the next shot which is showing them from a slightly different angle, it would be impossible for the Editor to join the two shots together. *But*, if he possessed one or two shots of the listeners, he could save the situation by inserting their close-ups between the two badly matching shots so that after seeing the listeners for a moment or so, the next time we see the talkers we are not surprised that one of them is standing up, *for we subconsciously imagine* he stood up during those moments when we were looking at the listeners. It is quite possible, therefore, that the Editor might ask the Director to take one or two such covering or cut-away close-ups of listeners, or whatever characters or objects happen to be playing *silent parts* in the talking sequence in question. But there is far, far more to editing or cutting than that.

A Man of Many Bright Ideas

Although, in the fully detailed script of the modern commercial film, everything is usually cut and dried down to the last detail, the skill of the Editor in assembling his hundreds of scenes controls the tempo of the finished film to a considerable degree. He can sharpen action by shortening scenes. He can *intercut* one or more scenes to create an impression of *simultaneous* occurrences, and he can make maximum use of the above-mentioned kind of cut-away shots, for reasons which are infinitely more important than covering up direct-



Above · Laurence Olivier in 'Hamlet,' which he produced and directed, and in which he starred. Below · A battle scene from 'Henry V,' with Laurence Olivier as the king.



Above · The miserable scholars at Dotheboys Hall as they appeared in the film of 'Nicholas Nickleby' adapted from Charles Dickens's novel. Below · A luxurious Hollywood setting for 'Night and Day'.

orial blunders when two scenes which are intended to follow each other do not match.

Instead of using the rather insignificant term, cut-away shot, let us call it an *incidental scene*. The clever Director will, as I pointed out, make the fullest use of picturesque or interesting incidents or objects which he spots whilst on the set, which could not possibly have been included in the script.

Now such incidental scenes can transform direct dialogue (when a character is visibly speaking on the screen) into indirect dialogue (when the speaker ceases to be visible, and the screen becomes occupied by miscellaneous incidental scenes which have a bearing on what that speaker is talking about).

A typical and elementary example is the film with a running commentary. The Commentator is invisible, and we only see what he is talking about. By this method, the pictures really do move and change, whereas if we have to watch someone all the time he is speaking, there can be no fundamental change (except for the change of angles previously described). A person talking on the screen is almost a static object. A series of ever-changing scenes of people, places and objects passing before us as in a panorama, whilst the voice of the speaker continues, is more alive, more interesting, *more cinematic*. And so if an Editor receives numerous incidental shots he will insert them into a scene which might otherwise be comparatively static, and thus bring it fully to life.

He will overlap shots, alter their order, introduce significant pauses, cut out irrelevant ones, thus generally creating, out of hundreds, perhaps thousands of strips, one continuous film.

He has a highly developed picture sense and knows immediately when a scene is weak or faulty, and which take is the best. He has also a good memory, developed through experience, and after viewing a roll of rushes, can probably remember which are the best takes out of a batch of many different scenes.

Keeping the Action Going

The Editor's work, then, is something more for you to notice, and particularly how he employs the incidental silent shot in the midst of talking or sound sequences. I'm sure you've seen musical films in which someone is playing or singing, and have noticed how, after you have been looking at the performer for a few moments, he is whisked off the screen, and you find yourself looking at his audience whilst his voice or playing continues. Then you see him again, and after that the audience once more. This form of construction keeps the film on the move. In old silent films the problem did not arise, of course, for there was no dialogue or music or singing to hold up movement. Once films began to depend partly upon the spoken word to tell their stories, it was found that speaking or singing characters, being motionless or nearly so, reduced the movement in moving pictures to a minimum if they remained before the camera whilst completing their lines. And so the cut-away or incidental scene is introduced whenever possible and, when skilfully used, does make the action flow in place of the image of a person or persons just sitting or standing, talking or singing.

Of course some films depend upon the Editor's creative ability more than others. When, for instance, Doris Day in any or most of her films is seen singing as she runs over fields, or rides in a cart, a car, or a train, or as she dances amongst crowds of people, the number of incidental scenes of the surroundings—of people at windows, at the roadside, in groups, and so on—which are available for intercutting is considerable, and the Editor needs to experiment with them in various positions *until his assembly creates a pictorial rhythm which is in harmony with the rhythm of the song or music.*

Incidentally (and this concerns the Editor as much as the Recordist), when you see a star singing as she runs up mountains or drives in cars, whilst a full orchestra accompanies her,

you might have wondered how it was done. It was recorded by what is known as play-back. Indeed, all big musical numbers are treated in this way. The method is for a star or an orchestra to be recorded first without any picture being taken at all. This enables the Recordist to place the instruments just where he wants them to create the right musical balance—a thing he would not be permitted to do if the scene was being filmed, for what is right for musical balance might not look right if viewed through the camera. Also, when only the musicians are present, they can be recorded and dispensed with, whereas the process of filming them is so lengthy that the cost of retaining them would be exorbitant. Well, when the track of the song or music has been approved and cut to its right length, it is then played back through loud speakers in the studio, the street, or wherever the singer is to appear, and she is filmed *but not recorded*, singing. Actually, she is probably only mouthing the words, but experience enables an artist to sing in perfect time to the play-back audible to her through the loud speakers. Thus the finest musical and vocal quality is obtained, and it appears that a singer is actually singing to perfection with a first-class musical accompaniment whether she is riding in cars, climbing mountains, or on a stage. This permits the picture cameras to move freely without limitations set by the microphone, and to film all the action *silent*, which the Editor will match to the previously recorded track.

In the next chapter which will deal with documentary films, I shall refer to cutting again, but of a more creative kind, and as different from the cutting of a big commercial film as is the documentary film itself.

What Sort of a Film Do You Like?

Having learnt a little about the technical and artistic departments which combine to produce the feature film, you will have realised how important are the specialists respons-

ible. The same production methods apply to all feature films, whatever their type. Let us briefly consider some of the different kinds of films which are so popular to-day, and try to decide which appeals to us most, which we should find especially interesting now that we have a working knowledge of film-making.

The film of adventure is, rightly, always popular, and it does not seem to matter much whether we believe in it or not, although many adventure films are most realistic. Films about life on, say, windjammers, have a deep fascination because they enable the dramatic beauty of the sea to play a big part, and you will notice that natural scenery, as distinct from studio settings, is often as important and as dominating as any film star. The truly great film played against *real* backgrounds is, or should be, designed to allow the scenery to share the acting honours with the stars.

Perhaps comedy films are even more popular because they offer complete distraction and not only make no pretence at being real, but laugh at reality, which is what most of us like. Norman Wisdom, Martin and Lewis and other comedians depend, as you will notice, upon speed—not only speed in their own actions, but the speed of the film as a whole. No time is wasted; one sequence changes to the next in a flash. You have also noticed, I expect, that modern film comedies are extravagantly produced. They include large, expensive settings, and great numbers of supporting players. It is necessary to build up a certain amount of spectacle around comedy stars to help them along, for theirs is a hard job. They must never repeat themselves, and they need support from good settings and musical relief to divide their antics. All the gags which seem to happen by accident are most carefully planned and rehearsed.

Light comedy is quite different. It usually has an ingenious plot based on domestic tangles, the acting is highly polished, and the situations skilfully dovetailed into each other. Often

the light comedy is adapted from a popular play or book, such as *A Doctor in the House*, and can be extremely successful. This story was by no means an ideal one for a film as the fun depended more on what people *said* than on what they *did*. The Script-writer and Director overcame the difficulty by keeping each scene very short, so that the point of the joke came quickly and the audience found themselves carried rapidly forward into another scene.

You may prefer the film that thrills, whether it is a gangster story, or a Western drama. Westerns are always popular because, apart from the likeable toughness of cowboys, they introduce us to a world of great expanses unlike anything we know. Western films are not usually regarded as being among the really important and serious achievements of the screen, but they are vigorous and reveal the ability of film to present the real world to us, and to show its beauty, whereas no book or play can present an equally vivid picture of prairies and mountains.

History on the Screen

Historical films are in quite a different category. They can be just as exciting and dramatic as any thriller or mystery story, but to some people the fact that they are set in past centuries makes them less appealing, and less realistic. One can easily *believe* in the modern film presenting life to-day, but one knows the historical subject is being 'acted,' and brought back to life. This is rather a pity, of course, for history presented in moving pictures is so much more vivid than in any other form. Films can really bring history books to life. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between the serious historical film, which gives the real facts as far as they are known, and the film which sets out merely to be an exciting spectacle, and suppresses or twists certain facts to achieve that end. Enjoy it for its excitement, beautiful.

settings, costumes and photography, if these are good, but don't mistake it for serious history.

When history and poetry are wedded as in the case of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, then the screen overflows with fine speech and pageantry. Naturally, Shakespeare wrote these great plays for the stage of his time; he did not design them to be expressed by moving pictures! Instead, he depended upon the spoken word and consequently, in spite of the great ingenuity of the producers in introducing movement as often as possible by means of all kinds of 'incidental scenes' and by indirect speech, much of both films consists of scenes which *do not contain a great deal of movement* but in which there is a good deal of talking—or, to give it its due, Shakespeare's fine dialogue. This must be so, for *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and *Richard III* are distinctly plays.

Nevertheless, they are films of exceptional importance, and they introduce the work of Shakespeare to thousands of cinema-goers who were previously unacquainted with it. When Shakespeare's plays are presented on the stage they are seen only by those people who know and like his works, whereas when Shakespeare reaches the screen he reaches millions who are meeting him for the first time. If the film versions of *Richard III* and *Hamlet* induce you to dip into Shakespeare's other plays, they will have been doubly worth while, but do not be tempted to think that the function of the screen is to present plays, however brilliant, or to depend upon the spoken word. Keep to the fundamental point, that film, if it is to be worthy of being considered an art on its own, must present material especially created for it.

The fact that the above films were in colour added further strength to their pictorial value. Colour employed *imaginatively*, and with restraint, can enhance a film, but, apart from increasing the beauty of settings and costumes, colour should never be distracting. It should be employed to increase

natural effects, and not to introduce an unnatural garish note. Already, with experience, producers are introducing colour in a more subdued manner and not treating it as a separate feature of the film.

Britain's Most Costly Film

History of another kind is provided by Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and no writer provides a better example of the error of using the screen for expressing dialogue than the late Bernard Shaw, greatest of modern stage dramatists.

As you probably know, Shaw didn't bother at all about stage technique and what can be called orthodox play construction. The dialogue is what matters most, and if it necessitates his characters remaining bunched together for an hour conversing ceaselessly, they do so. Now the genius of Shaw lies in the fact that despite the wordiness of his plays they are gripping and highly amusing. There may be no movement or stage drama in the accepted sense, but the dialogue is so vital and interesting that we listen, and forget the absence of plot or conventional drama. But—when it comes to transferring a Shaw play to the screen, lots of technical things matter. *Caesar and Cleopatra* presents a slice of ancient history via Shaw. It is overflowing with fine but lengthy dialogue which holds up pictorial movement. To make the film attractive to cinema-goers it was produced extravagantly with glittering costumes and wonderful settings, but although there was an abundance of such trimmings, the subject remained, fundamentally, unsuitable for film presentation. Vivien Leigh made a superbly beautiful Cleopatra. You might have admired the fine American screen actor Claude Rains and have found appeal in his rendering of Caesar. You might have been well satisfied with the marvellous Egyptian temples and scenery, and the great crowds. But whether you were or not, if you exercised your critical

powers, you must have been conscious that the glittering frame which was built around the picture did not make it a great film, for despite technical excellence (photography, recording, settings, etc.) the subject matter judged from good filmic standards is *not* filmable. The dialogue of the subject belongs to the stage, and even there, as I have said, it turns the theatre into a sort of debating society platform.

Strangely enough an earlier picture of Shaw's, *Pygmalion*, a modern story, which featured the late Leslie Howard, was a brilliant success. It was not static and although dialogue dominated the subject, it was presented in fascinating fashion and the film has long been remembered by thousands. It had no grandeur—no awe-inspiring spectacle. It did not need any. The material itself was wholly satisfying and delightful, and one saw it as fine screen material and *not* as a stage play.

How You Can Judge a Film

Think back, therefore, about the films you have seen, and decide which kind appeals to you most—the film that makes you share in wild adventure, the one that makes you laugh at its absurdity and unreality, the light cynical film of modern life, the thrilling or mysterious film that grips you, whether it is set on the prairies, or in great cities, or in space, the purely sentimental drama, or the historical film.

And when you have thought about it, bear in mind that all feature films are made in more or less the same way, each one being the result of the work of a number of highly skilled technicians whom you never see, controlled by the Producer.

You can now set your powers of discrimination to work, and look at the next feature film with eyes that are studying *settings, photographic values, lighting quality*, and the multitude of *scene changes* which occur, and how *close-ups* and *medium* and *long shots* show you different aspects of the characters; with eyes looking for *incidental shots* which build up sequences by making you observe little characteristics about the people in

the story, and about the rooms in which they live; ears that are listening to the *recording* and figuring out just where the microphone has been concealed and, in musical subjects, realising that the numbers have been filmed to *play back*. But above all, your eyes, ears, and brain will be co-ordinated and concentrated upon the *subject-matter*. You will be judging the story on its merits, praising it if it gives the film full opportunities to flow and present the subject in moving images, condemning it if it is too dependent upon the spoken word, and is struggling to present faithfully a screen version of a stage play, or to recreate in picture form the untranslatable pages of a novel.

You won't, of course, be doing all this consciously while you're sitting in the cinema. Only an experienced film critic could do that without having his attention distracted from the story of the film. But you will be registering these things in your mind, if you are sufficiently interested in them, and you can sort out your impressions when the show is over. You'll know, of course, long before you leave the cinema, whether you thought it a good, bad or indifferent film. Afterwards you'll probably be able to decide *why* it was one of these things, or all of them at one time or another. Thus the interest, and often the pleasure, of going to the cinema will last for quite a long time after the show is over.

Then, when you can, study with the utmost care the *original screen play* and decide if, by having been written especially for the screen, it is superior in construction and *filmic movement* to the story adapted from novel or play.

Finally, when you find that a film does not appeal to you, see if you can decide which of the technical processes can be blamed or, if it is technically perfect, consider whether the story is weak. If the stars are good *praise the Director*. If they are not so good, *blame him*. If they are good but still the film lacks appeal, the story itself is most probably unsuitable, or *unreal*. That is how to dissect the feature film.

4

THE DOCUMENTARY: A FILM ABOUT OURSELVES

YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED, OF COURSE, THAT THE AVERAGE cinema programme to-day consists of two feature films, the first being the biggest and longest film, and the second feature being shorter, and sometimes not very good. In between, there is a news reel, and occasionally a short film, but only occasionally because the two feature films take up so much time that there is none to spare for shorts. Most documentary films are 'shorts' and that is why you do not often see them in the ordinary cinema. By short I mean either one or two reels in length, running for 11 or 22 minutes.

What you have not seen you will not have missed, of course, but as I hope to show you, by being deprived of an opportunity of seeing the best documentary films in the cinema, you will be missing some of the finest of all films. In the next chapter, which is about private cinemas, I will explain how you can see documentary and special types of films. For the moment let us consider how documentary films are made, and what they are about.

The difference between the long feature and the short documentary film is the difference between fiction and fact. The old proverb says that truth is stranger than fiction. I should prefer to say it is *stronger* than fiction and that the best documentary films prove it.

The word documentary comes, of course, from document, a printed or written paper which can be relied upon to establish some fact or assertion, or to convey information which has been carefully gathered together as a result of exhaustive

research. The documentary film is a conveyor of facts, but if it were nothing more it would be very dry indeed. But it is a great deal more; to-day, it weaves the facts into a story which is often exciting, and pictorially beautiful, but is always *true*. It makes the important facts stand out and shows how what is happening in one place affects people in another.

The First Documentaries

If you have been at all interested in short films, you will almost certainly have come across the name of John Grierson. If you have not, make a note to look out for it in future, not necessarily on the screen, but in books, articles, and references to this more serious kind of film-making.

Some years ago John Grierson founded the documentary movement in England, the purpose of which was to present the everyday world, in dramatic form, not only as it really is, but also as it might be or should be. Grierson describes the documentary film as a 'dramatic interpretation of reality,' or the 'drama of the doorstep.'

The group of young people who started making documentary films had an uphill struggle at first. This was only to be expected, for Grierson's idea was not to make 'popular' films that would bring a lot of money into the box-office. He planned a new kind of film about real life, about ordinary people like ourselves, that would present facts vividly, impressively, and dramatically. Sometimes the action itself would be as thrilling as that in a fiction film but there was always the excitement of knowing it was a *true* story. It showed real people doing the things they do in real life. Many of them were the sort of people you might meet any day, though you would probably know little about them and what they did. Others you might never come across, but they might affect your life in some way, however indirectly. A journalist takes facts and makes a 'special article' out of them for a newspaper or a magazine, adding comments and

explaining the whys and the wherefores, and the documentary film-maker is the journalist of the cinema.

The first documentary film-makers saw that the cinema could be used for something much more important than showing only screen stories, which were sometimes very feeble entertainment and quite incredible. They saw that, while make-believe films could be good recreation and well worth seeing, there was a never ending source of material in the lives of ordinary people doing their daily jobs all over the country and all over the world, and that those who wanted to read about what was going on and what others had to say about it, would surely be interested in seeing it and hearing it. So they began, with one unit at first. Then more units were started, and eventually they grew into self-contained producing groups.

Grierson is an example of the best type of Producer. He not only visualised documentary films and inspired their production, but he started and developed the entire movement. In more recent years Grierson has turned to the feature film, but British documentary film remains his finest achievement. His influence and personality continue to guide documentalists today.

The Real Documentary

For many years there have been all kinds of short films—travelogues, country scenes, nature studies, and glimpses of interesting odds and ends, and in earlier days when cinemas showed only one feature film, the rest of the programme was made up of these miscellaneous shorts. They were usually interesting but not very inspiring, for they were not produced with any technical skill, nor were they very imaginative. They were merely the result of focusing a camera on beautiful views or interesting events. There was no careful construction, no creative ability used to shape them. Because these films, a few of which are still to be seen to-day, are *short*,

some people unthinkingly call them documentary films. But they certainly are not, and I'll explain why.

You have learnt how the big feature film is made by numerous experts in large studios. Well, the documentary film is made with equal care, but on a smaller scale, by people who, whilst being first-class technicians, have a purpose over and above their film-making. That purpose is to present on the screen the drama of real life—the story of you and me—how we live and work, and play; how our health is cared for, where our food comes from.

Whilst you may know a great deal about, say, your father's or your brother's work—what kind of factory, office or shop he works in and why—you may know very little indeed about other people's work and lives. We tend to live in water-tight compartments, and the person just round the corner may be as remote from us as someone in a foreign land. We don't know what he does or thinks, and he is equally ignorant of what we do and think. We both lose a lot by knowing so little about each other's world—and if we don't know what is going on round the next corner, we know even less about the work and lives of people farther away. For instance, if you live in a town or city, you will probably know next to nothing about farming, and if you live in the country, then city life, and how the great public services—the buses, trains, post office, big department stores, newspaper offices—are organised will be news to you. Similarly, the miner usually knows very little about aeroplanes and the development of civil aviation; whilst the pilot of a plane may know nothing about coal mining.

Now one of the first aims of the documentary film is to show how we all depend on each other. When someone begins to realise what the other fellow is doing, whether it is driving a train, building a liner, laying a telephone cable, or bottling milk, he understands how the lives of each one of us contribute to the life of the whole nation. He sees that his own

little world is far too narrow if he keeps to himself, but that when he learns something about what his fellows are doing and tells them about his own job, he widens it, and feels that he is part of the community. After all, since a modern country *must* be run more or less as a community, what one group does generally affects a lot of other groups, and so we can hardly help being interested in other people's jobs.

Some years ago, I remember, Basil Wright, one of our foremost documentary producers, made a two-reel film called *The Country Comes to Town*, which deals with exactly this point. It shows how completely dependent the town is upon the countryside and how, in return, the countryside earns its living by catering for the town. But neither the countryman nor the townsman knew much about the living and working conditions of the other. Townsfolk find the milk on their doorsteps in the morning, but have no idea of the great organisation needed to bring it from distant farms via creameries, pasteurising centres, and bottling stations to their homes. That is just one of the many huge organisations which provide us with essential things and services so familiar that we take them for granted, and never bother to find out how they are produced and reach us.

The purpose of the documentary film, therefore, is to show you the importance of the everyday jobs and everyday life of yourself and your neighbours, at home and abroad.

Facts that Are More Exciting than 'Stars'

Documentalists leave fiction to the makers of feature films, and deal only with facts. The world we live in provides their subjects and their scenery. Rarely do they use studios, and more rarely still do they employ professional actors and actresses. Ordinary people doing their ordinary jobs are the players. Of course, they need careful handling by the director because, being unacquainted with film production, they are inclined to become nervous before the camera, even though

they are being asked to do exactly what they do every day of their lives. There is an art in filming people which not only puts them at their ease, but results in filming them to advantage, an art which only experience can bring to perfection.

The documentary film, since it is usually short, might be likened to a well-written article or essay, and a feature film to a novel. The documentary film is usually short because *in brevity lies its strength*. Remember, it does not contain any plot in the sense that a feature film or a novel contains a plot, and does not introduce artificial dramatic situations to maintain interest and stimulate the audience. Now the producers of any film without a real plot or story would find it extremely difficult to make it gripping for an hour or an hour and a half, however well made it was. Some subjects definitely make a stronger appeal by being presented briefly, and this certainly applies to most documentary films.

As I have said, short films have suffered in recent years through lack of programme space; the average programme of two features has more or less ousted them from the cinema. They took on a new lease of life during the second world war because the government made the fullest use of documentary films to give information to the public, and compelled cinemas to show them. Television also came to the aid of documentary and many documentary film-makers produce their films today for the television screen rather than the cinema.

One of these films in an average programme is like a breath of fresh air, for it is such a change to see some real life on the screen, and although it may not be glamorous, and studded with film stars, it probably contains more real drama, more good sense, and shows greater understanding of the problems and interests of people like ourselves than nine feature films out of ten.

In these days new advances are being made at such speed in industry, science, agriculture, medicine and all the other activities which cater for our essential needs, that the docu-

mentary film is fully engaged, not only in recording such progress, but in giving us all the facts about each subject, and showing the advantages or disadvantages to each of us of progress or lack of it.

Films Carry Messages Across the World

The value of the film as a means of giving information lies in the fact that it can be sent easily from place to place. A roll of film can be packed in a little tin and sent anywhere. Thus actual scenes, sounds, and speech can be projected *simultaneously* not only all over the country, *but all over the world.*

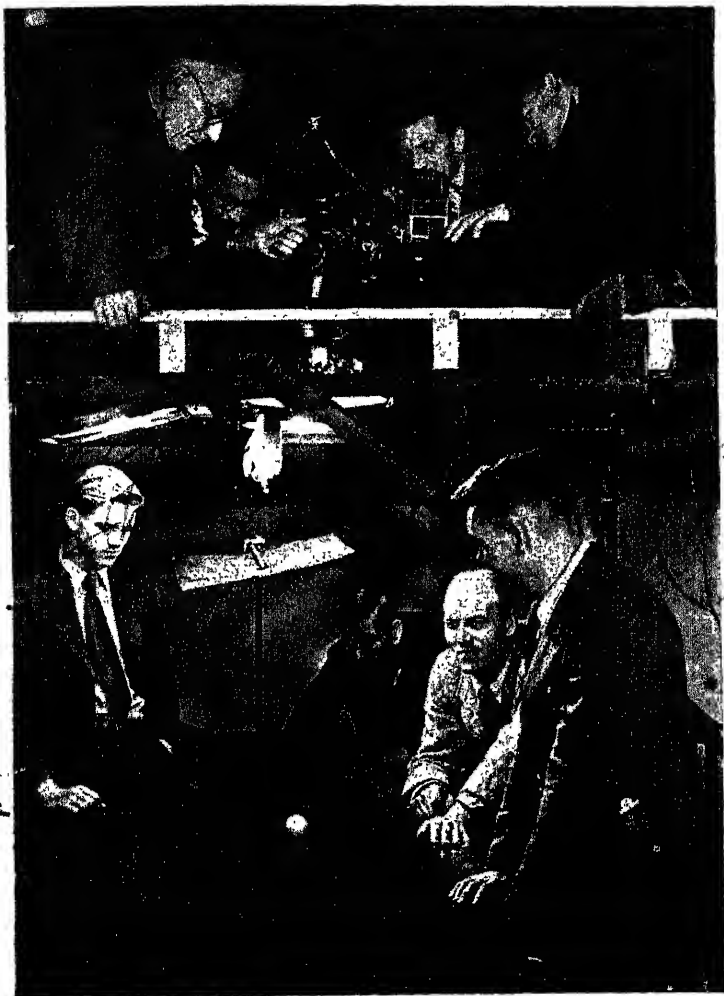
Because of this, film is an ambassador without equal, infinitely more effective in delivering messages and presenting facts than, say, pamphlets, posters, or even television, which for technical reasons is still a national rather than an international medium.

Whilst America was perfecting the making of feature films, the documentary film-maker in England was concentrating upon applying the same careful construction to short films; the documentalist regarded the screen rather as an artist sees a blank canvas upon which he is inspired to paint a vivid and dramatic picture of reality.

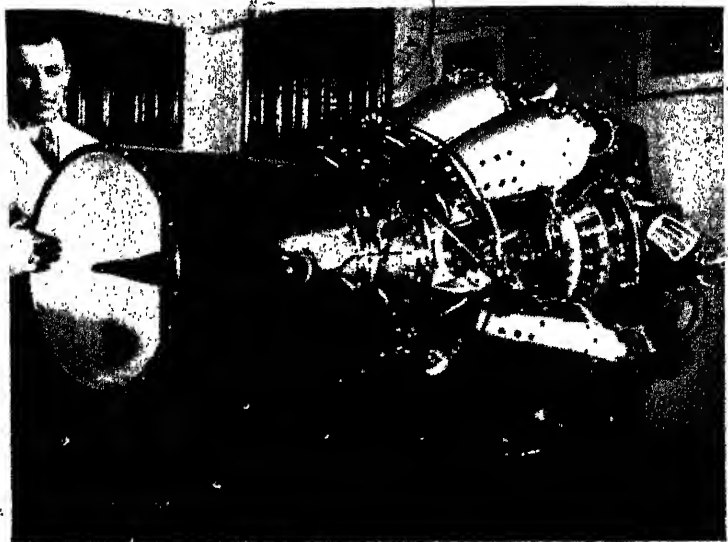
How Documentaries Are Made

A documentary unit is naturally smaller than a feature-producing concern, and in several ways the work is more individual. Generally speaking, however, the same specialist-technicians are required—Producer, Director, Cameraman, and so on, although the studio lighting expert plays little or no part in making the average documentary film.

The majority of these films have a commentary to describe them, although sometimes sequences are introduced in which the characters on the screen are heard and seen speaking. Now a film which is to be described by a commentary is made differently from one which depends entirely upon dialogue spoken by visible characters. This difference results in a



The faster the film runs in the camera, the slower the action on the screen. Here is a high-speed camera looking down on a billiard ball which will appear to move very slowly, and changing light and shade on its surface can be studied.



Above • Directors and cameramen working on a scene from 'Atomic Physics', showing John Dalton, the founder of atomic chemistry, in his laboratory. Below • A shot from 'The Wonder Jet', which tells the thrilling story of the invention of the jet turbine.

simpler method of filming the scenes, and it is because of this that the documentary film is more natural, and more *flowing*.

First, the scenes are usually filmed *silent*, and the microphone plays no part at all in the production until the commentary has to be recorded. The absence of the recordist leaves the cameraman free to set up his camera to the best advantage. That is a tremendous advantage to the filmmaker and brings us very near to the *ideal* film which depends entirely upon pictures to tell the story.

A documentary unit may be filming, say, an agricultural subject—potato growing, mechanical harvesting or, perhaps, ship-building on the Clyde, or fire-fighting. The camera or cameras employed will be portable instruments driven by clockwork, and they will be set up on roofs, low on the ground, on carts, on ships' masts. Thus scores of different and interesting angles are obtained. There is no sound track to worry about.

When a documentary film involves filming *interiors*, such as in a coal mine, hospital, school, or laboratory, portable electric lights are employed which temporarily transform the place into a studio. (Incidentally, there are very few places in which I have not had to make films, ranging from churches to opera houses, and from jam factories to art galleries.)

It is only when all the silent scenes in a documentary film have been correctly assembled that the commentary is recorded. The commentator sits before a microphone and as the film is projected on to a screen in front of him, he speaks the descriptive passages.

Talking On and Off the Screen

You should note carefully a very special difference between this kind of film and the sort in which the people on the screen do all the talking; the silent scenes of the documentary have been taken and assembled to tell a story *visually*. Sound or speech has not governed the work at all. Consequently, there

might be hundreds of highly effective shots on the screen which, *collectively*, present the subject dramatically. Now you cannot drastically alter the speed at which people talk. If a sentence has to be spoken, it will take a certain time. If the person has to speak it *visibly* on the screen, he will stand or sit there until he has finished. But *whilst a commentator is speaking a similar sentence, a large number of well-assembled scenes can be passing before you* because his voice is *only indirectly related to these scenes*. Thus the documentary method enables a free flow of pictures to be presented, described and strengthened by a commentary, but not *dominated* by it, or by *visible* speakers.

Very often a background of natural sounds, as well as the commentary, is added to the assembled silent film, particularly for industrial or mechanical subjects. Sounds of this kind are usually recorded by an independent mobile unit probably not working at the same time as when the scenes are filmed. The microphone picks up the sounds of whatever machinery appears in the film, together with all the general noises, and the Editor fits the sound tracks of each of these sounds to the corresponding scenes.

The sound track is then joined into a continuous reel of film; and after the commentary has been recorded, the sound, or as it is called, 'effects' track, is 'mixed' with it. That means a second recording is carried out, so that the two tracks—commentary and effects—can be merged on to one track, and the Recordist controls the volume of the effects so that they are *low* when the commentator is speaking, and higher when he is not. But in both instances, note that the sounds (whether of voice or effects) are *indirect* and do not *govern* the flow of scenes on the screen.

Cutting Brings the Film to Life

And that brings me to perhaps the most important part of the work of making documentary films—the cutting. As we have seen, the editing and the assembling of the feature film

is largely, if not entirely, governed by the spoken word but, as the documentary film is usually composed of a great number of strips of *mute* scenes, the Editor can use his imagination and introduce real pictorial rhythm into the film.

Imagine that a film is being taken of a liner at sea. It must make the audience feel as if it is on board. The *wrong way* to do the job would be to set up a camera on another vessel just behind the liner, and to be content to show it ploughing along in a single unchanging scene. The *right way* would be to capture, perhaps by two or three hundred different camera positions, every possible kind of activity on board. Now only in the cutting room can all such scenes be merged into a dramatic whole.

It is important, first of all, to make the audience realise that the majestic, steady way in which the liner ploughs through the sea is due to the combined work of the crew, to emphasise the dependence of the machine upon the human being.

Now what should the Producer show that will make the audience feel this? First there will be the Captain's bridge with its control instruments, and telephones, speaking tubes, and the signalling panel, which enable the bridge to keep in direct touch with every part of the ship; then the engine room down in the depths with its mammoth engines—revolving wheels, steel arms forever plunging to and fro—the radio operator—the deck crew; after that, the bows of the ship cutting through the waves like a knife, and also the stern, and the wide path of white frothy water the ship leaves behind.

Now if the cutter takes, for example, a strip of film showing the action of one of the ship's great engines, and divides it into three equal lengths, about four feet each, and if he also divides a shot of the bow of the ship cutting through the waves, into three lengths of four feet each, and if he then joins them into a single strip, *alternately—engines, bows, engines, bows, engines, bows, engines, bows*—the effect on the screen will

be vividly to connect the rhythmic movement of the engines with the driving of the ship through the sea. If the engines and ship's bows were not intercut in that way, but shown separately, following each other, a far less dramatic effect would be created.

An experienced documentary film-maker would make sure he had filmed the engines from various contrasting angles, and so the cutter, having assembled his strips to show the associated movement of engines and sea, would then add glimpses of the machinery from different aspects, and at the beginning of the sequence, he might add a shot of the bridge, and show a close-up of the signal dial registering Full Speed Ahead. Then he may possibly decide to take out the third glimpse of the bows cutting through the sea, and in its place insert about four feet of the stern, and the frothy path left by the ship. After the last shot of engines, he could insert a glimpse of the radio operator receiving a message, and this scene might well be cut in half and a shot of the ship's wireless aerial, high up across the masts, inserted to link the ship to the outside world via the radio operator. Then back to the bridge again—a close-up of the watching eyes of the Captain, followed by a short shot of the steel engine arm plunging forward, and then a study of the Engineer watching the engines.

That method of repeating certain scenes and knitting them together creates unity, and enables the film to present a *composite picture of everything going on at once*. Everything is going on at once, of course, and so a well-made film must show that it is. This it does by rapidly associating one activity with another, time after time, until we realise the close relationship between the bridge, the controls, the engines, the speed of travel, the bows, the stern, and so on.

So far the film has treated the subject mainly from an impersonal angle, and having assembled the mechanical foundations, so to speak, the cutter would begin to introduce the

human touch with another series of scenes, this time mostly of the passengers. Numberless little cameos would have been filmed of people asleep in deck chairs—playing deck quoits—having tea—walking round and round the decks—lolling in vast lounges, and so on, providing a vivid contrast to the continuous activity of the crew and the engines.

Quite an amusing pictorial parallel might be created by, say, a shot of one of the stokers shovelling coal into the furnace quickly followed by someone shovelling cake into his mouth. Swift touches bring life to a film, and an ingenious director can create numerous pictorial parallels like this, or associations of ideas, if he keeps his eyes open.

Thus, scenes of passengers, kitchens, waiters, sleepers, players, have their places in the assembled film, and they will show how many different aspects the subject has. *But*, there is a very important difference between a shot showing movement, and a shot of something or someone motionless. A scene of the ship's engines, however short, is full of fine movement. A shot of the bows cutting through the sea is also fine movement. But a shot of the radio operator, though interesting, *lacks movement*, and so does a shot of a sleeping passenger. Consequently, great care is necessary when assembling to see that the rhythm created by the intercutting of scenes containing movement is not weakened by the introduction of scenes lacking movement. These must be kept to themselves as far as possible.

Most documentary films present the rhythm of movement in varying degrees of excellence. Their subjects encourage it. Think of the movement of a plough slicing through the earth, and how the soil rises in waves and falls crumbling on either side of the great blade. Think of opportunities in filming industrial plant; revolving machines which automatically fill milk bottles, pack tea or cigarettes; presses which stamp out car bodies, ash trays, cups, carvings. Think of the dramatic possibilities in steel manufacture, which has been filmed so

frequently; and, different again, of the movements of leaves, of wheat swaying, of the thousands of wheels of traffic, of cranes swinging against the skies. The real world is overflowing with movement, and film is in its element when capturing impressions of it, and presenting them in a dramatic form.

A Bold Film About Our Food

Prominent amongst Britain's documentalists is Paul Rotha, who has produced many fine documentary films and, latterly, has been developing the longer, almost feature-length documentary. *World of Plenty* was his first feature-length example. Now this film was important because it tackled in a bold manner the vital question of the world's food supplies, and exposed muddles, and the ways in which commercial interests and methods of distribution have a great deal to do with shortages. Eminent dieticians and scientists appeared in the film and contributed their opinions, and emphasised the fact that if distribution is organised on a world basis, unhampered by material interests, there is food in plenty for all peoples. Rotha is a believer in the power of the *diagram* on the screen, and he frequently employs the Isotype method to give extra emphasis to certain facts and figures.* Diagrams in which lines, figures and shapes move before us are distinctive features of the documentary film. These, combined with an unrestricted flow of scenes, occasionally divided by a visible speaker when it is necessary for an important person to give emphasis to a particular point by appearing and speaking, are the special and very effective means used to show in the form of *pictures* what is going on in the world.

Rotha created a dramatic and topical film dealing with a matter of vital interest to us all. That is the purpose of the documentary film. After *World of Plenty* he tackled housing and replanting problems in *Land of Promise* in which he

* There is one of his diagrams facing p. 89.

used more or less the same approach—*real* people, playing *real* parts merely by carrying on with their normal occupations, constituted the cast in a film about real conditions. Fiction has no place in this type of production. Facts provide the 'plot'. Rotha's most important film in recent years was made jointly with Basil Wright. It was about world health problems and was made for Unesco. The two directors worked simultaneously in opposite parts of the world—Mexico and Thailand—and subsequently edited their material together to make *World Without End*. It ran for an hour and was given its *première* in a cinema and on television on the same evening.

But despite the success of the longer documentary, most will remain short. 'Shorts' have a better chance of success.

One of the saddest blows to the British documentary movement in recent years was the closing in 1952 during a period of economy of the government's own film-making group, the famous Crown Film Unit, originally the G.P.O. Film Unit founded by Grierson. That was in the early 'thirties, since when Grierson has travelled far. He has developed film production for the Canadian Government and has made feature films as head of an organisation employing young writers and directors called Group Three. But it was as head of the Films Division of the Central Office of Information, which embraced the Crown Film Unit, that he gave importance and dignity to the documentary film. I mention dignity because the commercial cinemas attach very little importance to short films, and regard them as 'fill-ups.' Many of the earlier, poorly made shorts were certainly little better than fill-ups, but it is most necessary to distinguish between that type of film and the intelligently made documentary which, despite its shortness, is, in many respects, of far greater importance than many long feature films.

An Idea Borrowed by the Story Film

An interesting fact is that the development of the docu-

mentary has influenced feature producers to introduce natural backgrounds more and more into their fictional stories. This is of the utmost importance, because there is nothing else that can present actual places and scenery from all parts of the world as films can and therefore they should be made the fullest use of for that purpose. Documentary films, of course, make the everyday world their stage, and all of us become the players, but feature films, as a general rule, are played in a world of make-believe created within studio walls. Whilst this unreal world is very enjoyable for a change, it does tend to exclude from the screen real places and backgrounds which we shall never see except on the screen. The increasing blending of fiction with factual backgrounds (that is, filming stories in real, instead of unreal, settings) points the way to the ideal film.

There have been, of course, several admirable examples of *documentary feature* films, such as the famous *Man of Aran*, made many years ago by Robert Flaherty. It was a film without any studio tricks, and presented a dramatic story of the struggle for existence of lonely islanders; how they were forever battling with the sea in its various moods, trying to get a living out of the barren soil, and happiness out of their primitive living conditions. It was fictional inasmuch as it introduced characters. It thus became a personal story as distinct from the impersonal documentary in which no definite characters play distinctive parts in the action.

Every year from all parts of the world come more and more feature films made in documentary style, using natural scenery and unprofessional actors to tell *realistic* stories. Examples are the tragic Italian films *Open City* and *Paisa*, made just after the War, *Pather Panchali*, a story of life in a Bengal village, *The Great Adventure*, a delightful animal film from Sweden and *The White Stallion*, from France. All these films use what might be called a documentary technique. But generally speaking, when we talk of documentaries we

refer to the short film, which is informing us of important developments, or drawing our attention to the lack of progress in some particular field. It might be telling us of the great advances the Russians have made in scientific or medical research; or explaining how our government works, or how local government is carried out and our individual responsibility towards it, and its responsibility towards us. *To get information about important matters is just as exciting as getting entertainment out of unimportant matters.*

The Documentary Shows Us the World

We cannot regard the documentary film as entertaining in the ordinary sense of the word, nor do we wish it to be, but if we look for it and study it, we shall not only discover what an exciting, flowing kind of film it is, but we shall also find out more and more about what the rest of the world is doing and what there is for us to do. Documentary films give us ideas, sometimes about things which could be done to improve our lives and sometimes about those that are being done. They not only point out deficiencies, mistakes and neglect, but encourage us by showing the courage, enterprise and energy of other people—people in the next street, the next county or on the other side of the world. It is always stimulating to find other people with the same aims as ourselves, and we can hardly have too much information about national and international conditions.

In view of the very great importance of documentary films to-day, is it not a thousand pities that such films are so rarely seen in the cinema? This being so, where *can* they be seen, for quite obviously documentalists are not spending all their time making such vital films if they can never be shown? There is a very interesting answer to that question which I will give you in the next chapter, so that you may know where you can see documentary films of every description.

5

FILMS IN MINIATURE: THE PRIVATE CINEMA

HERE'S THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, WHERE CAN DOCUMENTARY films be seen?

In the years before the Second World War, documentaries had reached a very high technical standard indeed, and yet, because of the lack of space in cinema programmes, they were being seen less and less by cinema-goers. Documentalists, therefore, decided to do something about this very serious position, and they set about the big job of organising methods of showing their films, quite independent of the cinemas. Success met their efforts, and to-day, not only throughout Britain, but also in most parts of the world, documentary films are being shown '*non-theatrically*.' That is rather a funny term, and perhaps it isn't quite apt, but it was agreed upon to make a definite distinction between the films we see in cinemas, which are classified as '*theatrical*,' and the documentary films shown in places other than cinemas, which are known as '*non-theatrical*.'

How the Small Film Started

The experiment really began when there were a number of extremely important and interesting short films which the cinemas had no room for, and so the makers of these films booked public halls in towns and suburbs, and advertised free film shows. The idea caught on, and more of such programmes were arranged. They were free because at that time they generally advertised certain commodities which big firms were manufacturing, or policies that firms wished to explain to the public; there was no need to charge for ad-

mission because these firms paid the expenses as part of their publicity outlay. But don't imagine they were advertising films urging the audience to buy a certain brand of soap, or pills or things of that kind. Instead, they were devoted to improvement of the home, cookery, town planning, health, and similar subjects, and some of the earliest of these films were sponsored by large Gas or Electrical Associations, by Councils and bodies set up to supply information on matters of health, and so on.

These shows were very enjoyable, and to make the programmes even more popular, cartoons and similar entertaining films were introduced. Then the war began, and the government, realising that films are the most powerful means of keeping everyone informed of developments, and for issuing instructions on countless matters varying from salvage to rescuing people from bombed buildings, decided to enlist the services of the documentary film-makers. It was a lucky thing that the plan for non-theatrical film shows had already begun to develop, because as soon as the government wanted to circulate their special documentary films so that the greatest possible number of people should see them, they naturally took advantage of the non-theatrical scheme and enlarged it to huge proportions. I have already said that during the war cinemas were compelled to show one short government propaganda film in their programmes every week, but this was not enough, and so the non-theatrical showings forged ahead.

As you now know, films shown in cinemas are made on standard size 35 mm. film, but all the non-theatrical films are on 16 mm. film.

For a great many years 16 mm. film was used almost entirely by amateurs, and a few scientific and technical groups who employed it for their own special experimental purposes. The 16 mm. film was never regarded as anything more than a toy by the professional film industry.

The documentary movement changed that attitude, and the widespread recognition of the fine quality films now avail-

able on 16 mm., which include, of course, sound, music, and speech, just as the cinema films do, has resulted in 16 mm. film being considered as important as 35 mm.

Where the Small Films Can Be Seen

From those first occasional shows in public halls dotted about the country, there has now been built up a vast organisation of non-theatrical shows which owes its development mainly to the film requirements of the government during the war. Today millions of people see these special film programmes every year.

There are two main methods of showing these films, and the programmes for both are supplied largely by the Central Film Library in London, which is the centre from which all government films are despatched. The first method is to show them in halls, clubs, institutions, colleges, factories, church halls, and similar places which possess 16 mm. projectors of their own. Such halls usually cater for people in the neighbourhood, and audiences of several hundred gather for periodical shows which are advertised locally.

The second method, developed by the government, is by means of mobile film units. There are scores of these in this country alone and they travel to the most remote places and give shows. A mobile unit is really a self-contained portable cinema on a van. It carries a sound projector, a screen, and the films. The apparatus is erected quickly in a village hall, or even in a large room. Although the theatrical and non-theatrical cinemas are distinct from each other, the audiences are not necessarily different, for quite naturally many of the people who go to the documentary shows go to cinemas at other times for entertainment in the ordinary way. But they like to meet, and see the non-theatrical shows for different and more serious reasons, and so the two kinds of shows do not conflict, nor compete with each other. Of course it is essential that they should remain distinct.

The invention of the mobile film show has enabled the 16 mm. film to penetrate to places and peoples far beyond the reach of the cinema. In fact a film show can be given anywhere. During the war I made some films in Arabic and Persian (that is, the commentaries were spoken in those languages), and the films were taken on mobile units and shown to remote desert tribes. They were very simple films, which explained how motor cars move, why aeroplanes can keep in the sky and fly, and what ships are like and why they do not sink in the water. Lots of the wonderful inventions which surround us are so familiar that we take them for granted and never bother to find out how or why they work. Imagine, then, the astonishment of the desert tribes at seeing vehicles moving along, flying, or floating, without any visible force pulling or pushing them! After all, when natives who have been used to carts being pulled by camels, suddenly see one going along without any camel in front, it must seem like magic and be rather frightening. That is how a motor car would appear to them. The films I have mentioned explained in simple terms how such mechanical methods of transport work. However, the main reason I mentioned the Arabian and Persian films was to illustrate to you how film shows to-day are within the reach of everyone, everywhere.

Films to Meet all Needs

The next important achievement is the grouping together of non-theatrical films so that programmes of special interest to certain types of audiences are easily arranged. In many instances, of course, a *general* programme is shown to miscellaneous audiences of young and old people, but those in special professions and trades are being catered for with films giving them expert information about their own particular work. Farmers, for example, are catered for in villages and country districts, where they are shown special films on agricultural progress which are of the very greatest value to them.

Remember that a farmer usually sees only his own farm and his immediate surroundings. He has no time to travel around the country to see what others are doing, and to study inventions and developments which would greatly help him. But films can show him the scientific and mechanical improvements which have been made, and by this means he is kept fully informed of progress. I have made quite a number of these special films for farmers, on such subjects as how to prevent and cure diseases in sheep and poultry, and on how to prevent wheat, barley and oats becoming infected with certain diseases that can ruin entire fields of crops. Another film showed the advantages to the farmer of possessing a welding apparatus and learning how to use it, so that he can repair his farm machinery instead of losing valuable time waiting for it to be done by an overworked blacksmith, or having to send it away to the nearest town to be mended.

Then I produced a very interesting film on birds which will help country people to distinguish between those which are friends and which do not damage or eat crops and fruit, and those which are enemies. You might well think that country people already know which birds are enemies and which are not, but this isn't always so, and lots of friendly little birds need protection because they eat all kinds of insects which would seriously damage crops and fruit if they were not got rid of in this way. It was a film too, which helped to encourage all people to be kind to birds, and not to take their eggs or damage their nests. It proves, in yet another way, what a great influence the screen can be, for no amount of reading books about birds could possibly bring home their characteristics, their friendliness, and the beauty of their song as did this film with its large close-ups of many different species, and its sound track full of the natural lovely music of singing birds. The film emphasised, too, how harmful the wood pigeon is to crops, and also dealt with the problem of rooks. There has been a lot of scientific investigation into the habits of

rooks, and the film showed how this was done, and also helped to prove that rooks are not really enemies to the farmer. There have been many other films especially for farmers, of course, and well over a thousand special film shows are given for them each year; films on the newest methods of potato growing, milk production, plant breeding and, for farms in remote parts, the advantages of electricity, encouraging farmers to install it on their farmsteads when it reaches them through the grid system; and so on.

Numerous documentary films, particularly those made in the early days of the movement, were quite suitable for cinema audiences and, indeed, were made for them. But when, as a result of being unable to obtain cinema bookings, the documentary film-makers developed the non-theatrical plan, most of these films became more specialised in their appeal, and those I am describing now are not, strictly speaking, suitable for cinema audiences. As their object is to give information about various important aspects of, say, agriculture, or science, the action is intentionally slow and detailed, whereas the cinema demands swift, smooth action.

• As you can imagine, the scope of the documentary film is vast. There are films on fruit growing, on the science of soil treatments, the health of dairy cattle, new farm machinery—in fact, on all branches of agriculture, and the great progress being made in all these directions is helped considerably by the non-theatrical film.

The Most Vivid Way of Teaching

There are special films for gardeners giving expert advice and demonstrations on everything they want to know from, say, how to store vegetables indoors to seed production or tomato growing. Such films not only give information in a vivid way, but encourage people to grow vegetables and fruit, which is of the utmost importance these days. Another example of the special film programme for the special audience

is a series about health—on the care of the eyes, ears, teeth, and how to defeat the more dangerous diseases. As the screen can give actual illustrations, this method of teaching is incomparably more impressive and vivid than lectures.

The professional specialist, too, is employing films more and more to assist him in his research and record work. Medicine and surgery are good examples of this. Imagine that an important operation is being performed. Today it can be watched by means of private television transmission to students. But the doctor may wish afterwards to lecture on it. He must depend upon his verbal powers to describe it, for the actual operation or experiment is over and cannot be repeated. Now, if a film is taken of all that occurs, every stage is recorded in actual moving pictures. That is the first great advantage.

The second is that such a film can, of course, be printed as often as necessary so that there are perhaps twenty, thirty or a hundred exact copies of the operation or experiment, described on the sound track by the surgeon's or lecturer's voice, and these can be despatched all over the world. There has never been so accurate and vivid a method of giving medical and scientific information as through films.

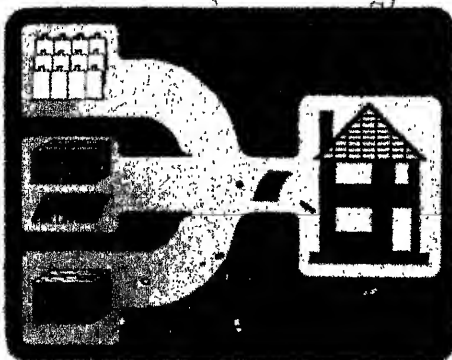
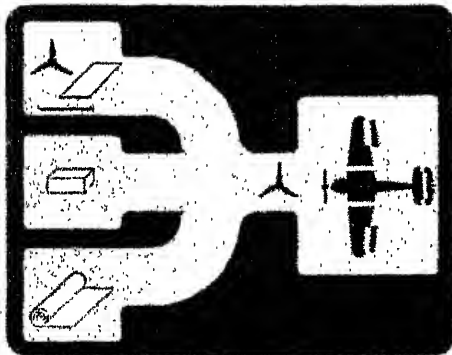
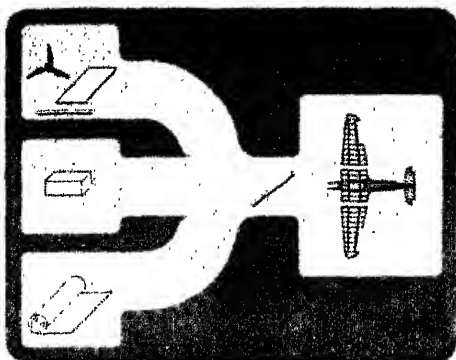
The third advantage is this. Whether a teacher is demonstrating how to make a fruit pie, or an engineer is showing how mechanical parts fit together, or a surgeon performing an operation—the crowd of watching students can only gather round the demonstrator and see the action from one particular angle, and not always very clearly, whilst those at the back see little or nothing at all. But a film of such a demonstration enables *hundreds* of people in a hall to see *everything perfectly clearly*; large close-ups enlarge essential action and thus emphasise it in a way not otherwise possible.

! Learning a Job from Films

Another group of important non-theatrical films are those



Above • A careers film, 'Caring for Children', showing how girls train for jobs in nursery schools • Below. Making harnesses fit for the royal horses. From the film 'Old Crafts and New Graces', showing some of Britain's ancient trades.



How moving diagrams tell a story. These three isotype diagrams are taken from Paul Rotha's fine film 'Land of Promise'. They show how the methods used in wartime to turn out large numbers of aircraft at great speed might be used in peacetime to build houses. The top and centre charts show how fast the aircraft is built up when orderly, steady streams of materials flow into the factories. In the chart at the foot, cement, bricks, tiles and timber are being directed in the same way to building houses. (In the film the materials on the left of the screen hurried along to build up the aircraft and house on the right). Nothing can show the good results of planning and of direction quite as dramatically as can the cinema screen.

which train people in special work. Again, I can give you examples of one or two I have produced. There was a film on coal mining machinery. You know that to-day more and more coal mines are becoming mechanised, and that all kinds of ingenious machinery are being introduced to speed up coal-cutting and to bring coal to the surface. Naturally, thousands of miners have no knowledge of such machines, and so a special centre for training them, which reproduced coal mine conditions, and into which the machinery was installed, was opened for them at Sheffield. The film presented the machines from all possible angles, and it was circulated to mining areas to enable the colliery supervisors to learn of the advantages of sending their men to the centre for the special training.

Another and quite different example was a film for merchant seamen on life-saving at sea. It was realised that the most vivid way to show the men, and particularly the new men, the many life-saving methods and apparatus on board, was to film them. You would be amazed at the ingenious equipment there is to-day—floating double-sided rafts containing medicines, food, water, signalling devices, and protective coverings. The film showed all these things and what a life-boat contains, and where and how to use the life-saving aids. But it showed more than that. It showed how a crew should leave a sinking vessel in orderly fashion; how the men should keep clear of the sides, and the direction in which to row away; and how to convert salt water into fresh drinking water. That is yet another illustration of how films can teach more clearly and forcefully than can any other medium.

In contrast, there are a number of special films for people learning how to cook. They are shown in schools, colleges and institutes and demonstrate every point slowly and simply leaving nothing to the imagination. Very large close-ups in all these films about cooking magnify each operation to a size in which, of course, they could never otherwise be shown to students. There are training films for almost every profession.

and trade, with helpful descriptive commentaries. Thus, there is a special film for each kind of special audience.

Films at School

But perhaps the greatest advance in the use of 16 mm. film has been its development for educational purposes. In England there are now two official organizations devoted to this work; the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education, which is responsible for the subjects chosen to be made into educational films, and the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids, which arranges for their production and sees that they reach as many schools as possible through local education authorities.

As you probably know, most schools and colleges in Britain are today equipped with projectors, and many interesting films are shown in classrooms. The planned use of educational films is already well established, but its full development has so far been prevented by lack of money to make teaching films. Even quite short films are expensive to make, especially if they are sound films: in recent years, too, the cost of making copies from the original negative has also increased and this has meant that in the difficult financial period since the war education authorities have bought fewer films for their schools than was hoped. Since about 1950 very few teaching films have been made in Britain.

The gap has been partly filled by films made by industrial firms, such as the many fine films produced by the Shell Film Unit, which are widely used in schools and technical colleges. A recent example of an excellent educational film made with the help of an industrial firm is *Mirror in the Sky*, which tells the story of the exploration of space by scientists like Sir Edward Appleton, who himself appears in the film. The sponsors of this film were Mullard Radio, who worked with the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education to produce a teaching film which would have the benefit of accurate

information provided by top-level scientists and yet be presented in a simple form for use in schools. One of the most important tasks which the National Committee for Visual Aids and the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids undertake is to bring together the 'subject experts' and the teachers who will have to use the films when they have been made.

Close-Ups Make Learning Easier

In addition to films, film strips are also widely used in schools today. A film strip, as I expect you know, consists of a number of frames from a film (or taken by an ordinary still camera) with captions. There may be 25 or more of such frames in one film strip. The little roll of film is then projected on to the screen at the rate of *one frame at a time*, which can be studied for as long as is necessary. It is really like the old magic lantern with its slides, except that the film strip gives a more brilliant picture and usually has its origin in the moving film already seen.

In addition to films and film strips, what are known as film loops are also sometimes used. A loop is a piece of film joined into a circle so that it will pass *continuously* through the projector, repeating the action again and again for as long as is necessary. Charts and models are also used to make demonstration more vivid, so that pupils are able to study in a way which has never before been possible.

Films Can Help You to Choose a Job

When school days are over, and you are about to start special training, film can again play a big part. Indeed it has two parts to play.

The first is in helping you to choose a career, for it can show you all the aspects of engineering, architecture, surveying, chemistry, building, decorating, dressmaking, cooking, upholstering, and countless other types of work. I don't know

of any finer way of learning what a job is like than by seeing it done on the screen.

If and when film has enabled you to *choose* a profession, when you actually start your training it will again help in teaching you. As I explained earlier, the screen shows processes and technical operations in explanatory close-ups, which, with diagrams, present a subject vividly and simply. Some while ago I made a film about a brother and sister both of whom were undecided what they wanted to do when they grew older. The film stressed the importance of having a profession or a trade and then it gave glimpses of all kinds of jobs. To help the boy, I filmed many of the fascinating training classes at the Northampton Polytechnic in London, where every branch of engineering is taught under actual working conditions with, of course, real equipment and tools. The classes varied from heavy engineering—engine overhauling, and machine construction—to electrical engineering, and radio construction. I also showed classes training boys for the building trades—bricklaying, plastering, painting, carpentry. The girl's possible subjects ranged from domestic science—house management, dressmaking, cooking—to beauty culture and hairdressing.

Now that gives a very brief idea of how films can help anyone to choose a career and, during recent months, special films dealing in detail with many different jobs have been made. Some years ago no one would have dreamt that film, usually thought of as providing entertainment in the cinema, would also be used for such important purposes as training people for jobs, or to help students, doctors, scientists, and engineers.

Experiments We Can All See

Not only is the kind of show I have described being given both in public halls, and in country areas by mobile units, but a number of film clubs and societies have been formed all

over the country to provide their members with 16 mm. film programmes. One noteworthy example will give you an idea of the scope of this type of private cinema—the Scientific Film Society. Scientific circles have been using films increasingly to record their experiments and to present to large audiences scientific discoveries and facts which, before films were used, were described only in scientific journals and papers.

I remember seeing at one of these shows some Russian scientific films taken at the Pavlov Institute. They showed experiments made to judge the intelligence of animals. I think there was a chimpanzee in one, and all kinds of ingenious tests were given to see how far its brain reasoned things out, such as how to obtain food from a difficult position, to open a door, or reach a certain spot by a roundabout route. In addition to showing the experiments to audiences in this country the films, of course, introduced us to the Pavlov Institute and Russian people, which increased our understanding of that country. That in itself, is an achievement worth remembering, and is another example of the power of films to show us *the real world*, and to bring distant places and people to us as they really are, which I mentioned earlier. Comparatively few people here have visited Russia and they cannot know a great deal about it merely from seeing an occasional photograph and reading an occasional article or newspaper report. Neither are they likely to remember them so clearly as they do moving pictures of real places, people and things.

On the same programme I also remember seeing a film of a wonderful Russian coal mine—the corridors of which, instead of being endless black ~~alleys~~, were white-tiled and looked as modern and immaculate as a tube railway station. I mention that particular film to show you how absorbing these non-theatrical films can be, and the scope of the subjects they cover.

Youth Clubs, too, offer another great opportunity for show-

ing the 16 mm. film. Both the ordinary entertainment films of the kind shown in the cinema (reduced from 35 mm. to 16 mm.) and the training films already referred to can be shown.

Another kind of picture which can best be described as the discussional film will, I hope, become popular in Youth Clubs. You might liken it to a sort of film brains trust, for it will show a group of people, young, or old, or mixed, having a debate, an argument or a chat, about some particular subject, and thus setting the ball rolling. When the film is finished the audience can carry on the discussion, and as you will agree, there is nothing quite so stimulating and entertaining and really helpful as a good all round discussion about some current problem. The film show in the club, followed by a discussion, is perhaps the best way not only of widening one's general experience, *but also of studying films.*

You will remember how, earlier in this book, I dissected a film, separating the various literary, artistic and technical contributions which, together, create the production, to enable you to look at a programme with a more critical eye? Well, if you belong to a Youth Club, or can organise one, and films are shown at regular intervals, you will have a splendid chance to analyse them, and to discuss them in detail afterwards, judging their story values, direction, photographic qualities, sound, continuity and editing.

Libraries Will Lend All Kinds of Films

I should explain that there are numerous film libraries in London and the provinces which supply 16 mm. films on most subjects ~~not only to clubs and societies~~, but to those people who are lucky enough to have their own 16 mm. projectors at home.

Such films are rented at so much a week. Of course, the special kinds of documentary and training films which are unsuitable for the commercial cinema can generally be obtained from the Central Film Library, but the entertainment

films are rented from the other libraries in the same way that cinemas rent films. Perhaps you are wondering how it is that 16 mm. versions of ordinary entertainment films are available for private cinemas since the theatrical and non-theatrical cinemas must never compete. The answer is that only entertainment films which have completed their cinema showings may be reduced to 16 mm. for private purposes. They are, therefore, old films. Nevertheless, they are just as entertaining as they were when first made, and they provide admirable opportunities for studying film construction in a more leisurely way than is possible when seeing them in the cinema. If you study film library catalogues you will find they also enable you to see some of the famous old films which are regarded as classics, and which are very well worth your attention.

Now that the recording of sound, music and speech on 16 mm. film has been brought to a high pitch of perfection, and the 16 mm. projector gives good results both in picture and sound reproduction, nothing can stop it from developing further.

How to Get Perfect Results with the Small Film

We must remember, however, that public halls, club rooms and similar places which were not built as cinemas, do not always have good acoustic properties, so that the sound may not be as clear as one is accustomed to in the ordinary cinema. This cannot be helped unless someone is around with a knowledge of how to improve acoustic properties by hanging curtains over the walls, and so on. Also, the 16 mm. picture is sometimes not as brilliant and clear as it might be. The high intensity arcs used in cinema projectors give the maximum amount of light, of course; most 16 mm. projectors use what is called a cold light—an electric bulb—and this sometimes gives a dull yellowish light. But again this depends a lot on the distance of the projector from the screen, and also on the kind of screen. Under first-class conditions, with an experi-

enced demonstrator, the 16 mm. film should give perfect results.

It is interesting to note that most documentary films now being made by professional units for showing in private cinemas are produced, in the first instance, on standard size film, 35 mm., and then they are reduced to 16 mm.

In many cases this gives better results than by producing in the first instance direct on to 16 mm. There is another reason, too. By producing on 35 mm., the film becomes available for showing both on 35 mm. and 16 mm. If, on the other hand, it had first been produced on 16 mm. then it would have been available in that size only, for although 35 mm. can be reduced to 16 mm. with perfect results, 16 mm. cannot be enlarged or 'blown up' to 35 mm. with equally good results.

The latest advance in 16 mm. film-making is, of course, the perfecting of colour. The use of colour for the special kind of films we have been discussing has many obvious advantages. It enables colour changes and contrasts to be shown in films dealing with, say, decoration, textiles, chemistry, medicine, plastics. And so, running parallel to the cinema film, is the 16 mm. non-theatrical film. It serves quite a different purpose, but each supplements the other.

I advise you to make every effort to see in the club room and the private cinema all the non-theatrical films you can, in addition to those you may see in the class-room. They offer unique opportunities for study, for enlarging your interests, and for exercising your critical judgment.

The 16 mm. film never can compete with or supersede the ordinary cinema; nor do its producers wish it to do so, for it is offering the kind of films which can best be seen and enjoyed away from the cinema. Whether one is still at school, about to leave it, engaged on technical training, or actually at work, either in town or country, 16 mm. film offers information, instruction, and enlightenment in the most vivid and dramatic form there is.

6

NEWS REELS OF TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

NOW WE'LL RETURN TO THE ORDINARY CINEMA TO STUDY news reels, which are in a class by themselves, and deserve our special attention. Just because news reels are short you might class them as documentary films, but they are not, as you will see. Whether they could or should be we can decide a little later.

The first point of interest about a news reel is that it is shown more widely than any other kind of short film—and more regularly, too. Only on very rare occasions does a cinema programme fail to include one, and then it is probably because the feature film is unusually long. Otherwise, in every cinema, everywhere, dividing the two feature films, is a news reel. Its release is as regular, and the sight of it as familiar, as that of a newspaper.

Are You Interested in the News Reel?

Now there are several interesting attitudes towards the news reel. Some people look forward to it, and enjoy seeing real people and places; others look at it more or less mechanically, and only when something of special importance appears, do they take real notice, ~~and~~ ^{while} others don't like it at all, and grow impatient for it to end so that the feature film can begin.

You are bound to belong to one of those groups. Which is it? And what are your reasons either for liking it, being indifferent to it, or disliking it?

Despite its shortness, the news reel is a most important type of film and carries with it great responsibilities, for upon its accuracy a great deal can depend.

If you are interested in current affairs both at home and abroad, as you should be, of course, then the news reel introduces you to personalities and places in the news, and increases your knowledge of them. It can do more. It can arouse your interest in things you have previously ignored. It can, or should be able to, set you thinking.

But it has one unavoidable drawback. It is really too short to deal with any subject in sufficient detail to enable you to know all you should about it. This can't be helped under present circumstances, for if news reels were longer, programmes would not have room for them. Therefore, brevity is the soul of news.

The News Reel Does not Explain

In its present form, the average news reel offers little more than pictorial headlines, and you know how, by glancing at the headlines of a newspaper, you can discover the bare fact that certain important things have happened, but you don't learn any details about them until you read the reports and articles accompanying the headlines. Headlines announce what has happened in as few words as possible, and a news reel does the same in moving pictures, but without any explanatory details which would enable you to learn *why* this or that occurred. Perhaps an even closer comparison is between the news reel and the kind of newspaper that consists mostly of pictures. In a minute or so you have seen the places and people involved in current affairs, but there your knowledge ends, unless you take the trouble to read everything you can about the subjects in question. A news reel is usually about eight or nine hundred feet in length, and may contain three, four or five sequences, each of about 150 to 200 feet, sometimes less. That means that each subject runs for two minutes,

or under, and it is not possible in that time to deal with any subject thoroughly. There are exceptions, of course, and sometimes, as you will have seen, a news reel will devote its entire length to one particular subject if it is of outstanding importance.

But here is a fact to note. A film can show, even in the space of one or two minutes, a variety of vivid scenes which, if assembled skilfully, can give what appears to be a surprisingly complete picture of an event. In fact, the brevity of the news reel sequence is not so noticeable to an audience as one might expect. As I explained earlier, when pictures are flowing on the screen without visible characters speaking, and are accompanied by a commentary, a very large number can be presented to illustrate a particular subject. That is news reel technique. It can pack into a minute or so a maximum amount of action.

As the news reel presents the real everyday world, why is it not a documentary film in the best sense of the term? Because it presents no analysis of a subject. It gives you glimpses, impressions, headlines, whereas a documentary film takes one, two, or three thousand feet to deal as exhaustively as possible with one particular subject. The news reel is more or less superficial. The documentary film is fundamental.

The news reel deals only with the *surface* of important matters, but never goes deeply into them, chiefly because it has no space in which to develop. A typical news reel might contain a procession, a big fire somewhere abroad, a notable person opening the new wing of a hospital, and perhaps a horse racing event.

By seeing such items frequently, some people have developed the habit of looking at them more or less unconsciously. The subjects do not arrest attention. One horse race or football match looks very like another. All processions, fires, crowds, regattas and similar events broadly resemble the processions, fires, crowds and regattas one saw last year. But one

should not blame the news reel for this. The present duty of news reels is to film important functions, annual events, etc. and to deal with them as well as they can within a very limited space.

Even so, be on the alert for examples of smart camera work. You will sometimes find a camera following race-horses right round a large track, keeping them in the centre of the screen all the time, and that is a very exciting picture to watch. Similarly, cameramen are ever ready to follow any fast-moving action which catches their eyes when they are out after news stories.

What IS News ?

But this kind of news story raises an important question which possibly has not occurred to you. What is news? Nowadays, when we have so many different kinds of news at such regular and frequent intervals, in newspapers, in broadcast bulletins, and in news reels, there is a tendency to regard everything included in them as news, whereas quite often the items they deal with aren't news at all in the proper sense of the word.

If there isn't sufficient real news to build up a paper, a broadcast, or a news reel, then miscellaneous sequences of unimportant happenings are inserted. The interesting thing is that by being included in a news reel, and mixed up with important current items, these miscellaneous sequences appear more urgent than they really are. It is true to say that quite a number of items which appear as news are not news at all, whilst quite a lot of events and developments which are news do not appear in news reels either because there is no space, or they are considered unsuitable, or because it would be difficult to illustrate them. It is of much greater importance for us to have news about say, some scientific discovery or development, than to see a dog show, but the dog show is easier to film, and much more amusing.

You often hear people ask if news (whether in the press, or on the screen) is reliable. Perhaps you have wondered this yourself. The answer is that it is as reliable *as far as it goes*, but that it does not go far enough.

You may see some dramatic pictures of life in the world today—political refugees, people without food—or you may see crowds rejoicing. Those pictures are in themselves evidence of what was happening at those particular moments in those particular parts of the world, but do you know what lies behind those events—*why* people are suffering in one place, rejoicing in another, and so on?

From the news reel pictures you could not tell what events led up to what you are looking at. Many events, of course, are complete in themselves—the Boat Race, the Derby, or the Cup Final for instance. They are news in one sense of the word. They happen regularly, and to show pictures of them is logical and of particular interest to all those people who live far away from the Thames and therefore could not watch the Boat Race, or from Epsom and so could not go to the Derby.

But if you relied only upon a news reel for your information about international and political problems, of conferences, threats to peace, rioting and strikes—which are much more important—you would know very little indeed about them. Only by carefully studying the reliable papers, magazines, and books, can you build up for yourself the history of this or that crisis, and learn to look *behind the news*, and to reason out for yourself whether this or that action is right or wrong. The news reel is just a curtain-raiser. It is for you to discover the drama of world affairs, and to become well-informed about it. And if you make a practice of studying current matters, then the news reel will add to your knowledge, with evidence, for your own eyes and your own ears, of the people and places in the news.

Sometimes a One-Sided Affair

The news reel is intended to be quite impartial and to deal with all matters within its scope without expressing political opinions. It is very difficult to be really impartial, of course, and within their limits the news reel makers are fair. The trouble is that there are two sides to every question, and only the accepted or popular side is presented on the screen. That is because the cinema is not a place for public debates, but for entertainment, lightly flavoured with brief references to current news presented in a non-controversial way. That is why the news reel follows the general trend of events. It gives in film form what the newspapers give in printed form, and the radio gives verbally.

During the war when news was very strictly censored, all material was distributed to the news organisations by the Ministry of Information, and so naturally news stories were all very similar. When an important person made a speech, his words were printed in the press, quoted over the radio, and sometimes he was shown speaking on the screen. Of course the screen can make many news items more interesting than can either press or radio, because it makes them *visible*, but the subject-matter is usually the same in whatever form it is presented.

News Reels Don't Tell the Whole Story . —

Screen, radio, and press are national, so naturally they express national viewpoints, and do not write, speak or illustrate news from an international angle. They can therefore be impartial only within national limits, which, of course, narrows down their approach to world affairs. Each nation always considers that it is doing, or has done, the right thing. A nation rarely admits it has done the wrong thing, and by nation, I mean, of course, the government, which is, or is supposed to be, a nation's mouthpiece and which speaks to all its citizens through radio, press, and screen.

Consequently, you will usually find that a national point of view is expressed in the news reel, and that is why it is so necessary for you to search beneath the surface to try to find out all the facts about the subject, remembering that each nation or group of nations acts in the way it thinks is best in its own interests, which may not be in the interests of the *human race as a whole*. In other words, we should try to think internationally, and to regard the peoples of the world as one family, for they are very much like each other, even though they are sometimes made to appear quite different when they are presented in national groups. We should not lose sight of the fact that every nation is composed of millions of individuals who like many of the things we like, and often live in much the same way. They have certain national characteristics which differ, of course, but *fundamentally*, we are all one race—the human race.

The news reel, under more favourable circumstances, could do a tremendous lot to increase understanding between the different races, and I hope one day it will, but in the meantime, study it carefully, and follow up the subjects it has presented and find out all you can about them so that you may keep abreast of current affairs with something more than mere surface knowledge.

Speed the Essence of the News Reel

Now a word or two about the actual making of news reels.

You will have realised from preceding chapters that film-making is a lengthy, slow business. Making a carefully constructed film is something that cannot be rushed. It might take months. The news reel, however, is the exception. It is the quickest of all kinds of film-making, and it must be so. It would be illogical to make a film of, say, the Derby, or the Cup Final, with the same intricate and detailed kind of direction, camerawork and editing that are applied to the production of a documentary or feature film, for then it

would not be finished and ready to show until weeks or even months after the Derby had been run, instead of on the next day. And so, as the news reel has to be made almost as quickly as a newspaper, it has developed its own methods of production.

Rain, Hail or Snow—the Camera Must Turn

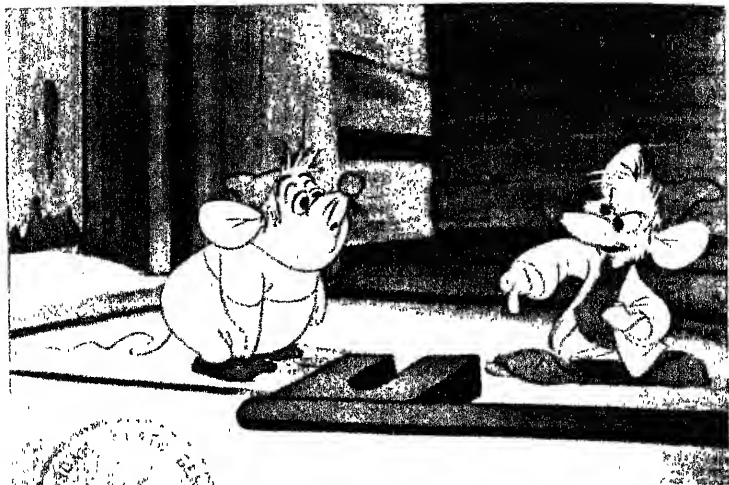
The first rule is that it must be prepared to sacrifice photographic quality owing to bad weather. Feature and documentary film-makers when depending upon fine weather for exterior work may wait many days or weeks for the sun to shine and give them the lighting conditions they need. But the news reel crews must film important events whatever the weather may be. If the Queen is opening Parliament, or Cabinet Ministers are to be shown leaving an airfield, or big processions or sporting events are occurring, they must be filmed, whether it is pouring with rain, or even if it is foggy. That is why news pictures on the screen are sometimes not very clear. Indeed, it is remarkable how some scenes are taken at all in the poor conditions under which the cameramen have to work.

The next rule is that editing must be reduced to a minimum. There is no time to work out involved cutting, to create rhythm with pictures, or to insert special additional scenes or shots to build up sequences. The material shot by perhaps two or three cameras covering an average event, or by as many as twenty used for an extra important one, is run through on the screen immediately it has been developed, and the best scenes are selected and assembled and the rest put aside.

Sometimes an event filmed one day will be on view in cinemas the next. Most news reel crews work with light portable cameras, and their sites, or camera positions, are arranged for them by the production manager beforehand. A considerable amount of planning is necessary to make sure that a particular event is covered by cameras in the best positions.



An artist working with a mirror to help him to get the right expressions for Disney characters.



One of Walt Disney's best pictures—the full-length colour cartoon 'Cinderella'. Above: Two of the mousey 'stars'. Below: Cinderella and her friends the birds.

In this country there are four news reels—Gaumont, Movietone, Pathé and Universal. They are members of a Newsreel Association and work on a rota basis so that each company gets its fair share of good sites for important events. On 'rota' occasions one company usually takes scenes and supplies duplicate negatives to the others. Each newsreel has an Editor who decides on the 'make-up' of the reel, that is, which subjects shall be used and the order in which they shall appear. In 1957 the B.B.C. joined with the Rank Organisation and the Australian and Canadian Broadcasting organisations to set up an international newsreel service with a chain of cameramen throughout the world. This service supplies news items to both cinemas and television stations.

Sometimes, as you know, people are filmed visibly speaking. They may be talking in a public place before a crowd, or sitting at a desk and speaking directly at the cinema audience. In the latter case, the filming is done in a small studio just big enough to accommodate an office or a room background.

Here's an interesting point you had possibly not thought about. When a person wishes to talk *directly* to a cinema audience, that is, to *every person* in that audience individually, he looks straight into the camera whilst he is speaking, and the result is that on the screen he looks directly at *you* wherever you may be sitting. But it is only when speech is being addressed to the audience that the person being filmed looks into the camera. At all other times, film actors look everywhere *but* into the camera for if they didn't, in error, they would be looking at *you*, and how ridiculous it would be if Jack Hawkins or Gregory Peck suddenly looked at *you* during a film, instead of at the other characters on the screen!

The News Reel Library of Noises

Usually news reel shots are filmed silent. When they are assembled, the commentary is added and, sometimes, sound effects as well, such as the cheers of a crowd, or the music

a band is playing. These sounds are often added from the film library of sound tracks which each news reel company keeps. It has all kinds of sound tracks stowed away—crowds roaring as a goal is scored at a football match, cheering at processions long since past, ships' sirens, gun fire, the sound of aeroplane engines, and so on. When such general noises are needed their tracks are taken from the library, but when special effects that are peculiar to the scene being filmed are required, they are recorded on the spot, of course.

The news reel commentator is very important. His voice is heard so regularly that although he is invisible, he becomes a familiar personality to the audience. Some commentators write their own commentaries; others merely read what is placed in front of them.

After seeing a news reel through once, the commentator is ready to record the commentary. There are divided opinions about the importance of the commentator, and the part he should play. I will give you both opinions and then you can decide for yourself which you agree with. One view is that the commentator should not make the audience too conscious of his presence by his quips and jokes, and the dramatic emphasis he gives to his words. Instead, he should merely describe what you are looking at, and you should be more or less unconscious of him, just as you should be unconscious of good camerawork and camera movement while you are seeing the film, though afterwards if you have trained yourself to be a good judge of such things, you will analyse it and decide why it was good or bad. The other view is that the commentator makes the news reel interesting and lively by his bright remarks, and that it is right that he should become the star of the reel, for that is what a number of news reel commentators have become. It is greatly to their credit that they have managed to do so when you come to think of it, because they can't be seen. They have only their voices to make them popular, and with which to establish their personalities.

But sometimes they overdo things, and make jokes and wisecracks at the expense of the people on the screen which are not always in the best of taste. Also, by their intonation, and verbal emphasis, they can politely praise or just as politely sneer at the people we are watching, according to whether those people are 'friends' or 'enemies.' In other words, the commentator exercises a great power with his voice, and by the wording of the script he is reading he can help to mould public opinion for or against this or that person, movement, or country. But he has a difficult job, and he not only has to work fast, but to read fast. A news reel sequence is far too short and swift-moving to permit of a leisurely drawl. He has to be on his toes the whole time.

All news reels are more or less the same in make-up. Some of them offer better camera work than others, and some introduce special little carefully built-up sequences which might take several weeks to prepare, and which are therefore near-topical, but are naturally not about something which happened yesterday, for that must be shown within the next few hours.

The news reels of other countries, too, use more or less the same formula—a single reel containing four or five little sequences. The only opportunity the news reel units have of presenting films which may be judged by the standards applied to feature and documentary films is when they build up special issues for, say, Christmas, Armistice Day, or some other annual event. Sometimes they plan to build up an entire reel for such an occasion out of film library material of good quality. Only such carefully made issues of news reels should be judged by the same standards applied to other kinds of film-making, for naturally one should not criticise ordinary news reels for their poor photography, or unimaginative editing when one remembers the speed at which they have to be made.

Something More Than a News Reel

As I have said all, or nearly all, news reels are similar in construction. An exception was the American *March of Time*, and another was the British *This Modern Age*. The latter was produced by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation, but the series finished in 1950. The last *March of Time* appeared in 1951. This is indeed a pity, for there are far too few films which give a true factual analysis of current events.

Such films were nearer to being documentaries than news reels, and really did present news in the most intelligent sense of the word. They achieved what other forms of pictorial journalism fail to do—they presented the *whole* story, or at least a very large part of it.

The subjects of these series were always of current and vital interest. They were not subjects like horse races or football matches which begin and end in a day and are out-of-date at once, but dealt with matters of fundamental importance, such as the need to reform prison laws or the position of the world's wheat supplies. Two examples from *This Modern Age* were *Coal Crisis* and *Sudan Dispute*.

The *March of Time* was, perhaps, more forceful, faster and more melodramatic than was *This Modern Age*. The British series, however, was excellent in its more solid way, and was noted for its very fair presentation of all sides of current problems. News reels, for commercial reasons, are condensed into short single reels into which several sequences must be packed, but in the type of news reel like the *March of Time* and *This Modern Age* two full reels were devoted to one subject only, and presented it from as many aspects as possible.

Take, for example, the coal shortage. A news reel might show you idle mines, strikers playing football, cities in darkness when lights are cut off, and so on, all in a minute or a minute and a half, whereas *Coal Crisis* dealt with the subject from every possible angle, and you really learned

something about it. You learned the importance of coal to the future of this country, and how success or failure in the fight for economic survival depends upon it. You learned too that there are untapped reserves of coal which can last for more than a hundred years. The film showed the labour difficulties which the newly-formed Coal Board had to face, and the problem of attracting miners back to a job they had grown to distrust.

Sudan Dispute showed how for fifty years Anglo-Egyptian Sudan had been the joint responsibility of Britain and Egypt, and we learn why Egypt feared control of the upper reaches of the Nile by a separate power. Another issue of *This Modern Age* was called *Development Areas*, the old depressed areas containing one-seventh of the total population of Britain, once prosperous as centres of coal, steel, tinplate, shipbuilding. The film showed what was being done to ensure that these parts of the country would not again suffer from unemployment and industrial depression.

So you can see the importance of such films, and how very different they are from news reels. They are documentary films with one important difference. They are made by people who know how to hold the attention of cinema audiences which have gathered together first and foremost to be entertained, not primarily to be informed.

I explained, as you will recall, that most documentary films which are shown non-theatrically are much better suited to the private kind of cinema than to the ordinary one because they are slow and informative rather than swift and entertaining. But series like the *March of Time* and *This Modern Age* were not made for private cinemas but for the world's commercial cinemas, and so were produced with all the technical polish of feature films. This was a big achievement when one remembers they dealt with subjects which could easily be boring if presented in a slow, dry lecture style.

Will the News Reel Change?

Yes, the *March of Time* and *This Modern Age* rank as documentary films, but also as news reels--the kind of longer news reel which one would like to see replacing the very brief one of the moment. After all, it is only factors such as lack of sufficient programme space and certain commercial considerations which have resulted in the too short superficial news reel of today. It is possible that in the future cinemas will show only one good feature film in a programme, instead of two, and this will leave room for several first class short films. If this happens, there will be an opportunity for news reels to become longer, and to deal with one or two important subjects at length, instead of with four or five which are given only a minute or so each.

The present news reel is rather like a stop press column in a newspaper, whilst the *March of Time* resembled a full length article full of details and statistics, and was the result of very considerable research work. The *March of Time* and *This Modern Age* offer good examples of how hundreds of silent pictures joined together with the utmost skill can flow uninterruptedly whilst the commentator enlarges upon the subject they are illustrating. This is what I call specialising in the *indirect* commentary.

There are really two kinds of commentary. The first is direct and elementary. It describes what you are looking at and leaves nothing to your imagination. Here is a crude example of the direct commentary. You see a man lifting a cup of tea and drinking, whilst the commentary says, 'Here is a man lifting a cup of tea and drinking it.' That is *direct* description and is, of course, unnecessary for we don't need to be told what we can see and understand for ourselves.

The *indirect* commentary would, while the man is lifting the cup, tell you why he is there; why he is drinking tea; why there is a shortage of cups; and so on--all whilst the

man is seen drinking his tea. But never once would the commentator *describe* the man drinking the tea, or explain that now he is draining the cup, or putting it back in the saucer. He would talk about only what was *not* being illustrated, and the man on the screen would *symbolise* the general subject.

Similarly, the makers of the sort of series I have described select important themes and, after intensive research, they write comprehensive commentaries which they illustrate with film as far as they can, at times with direct examples, at others indirectly. Whilst the film is introducing us to, say, the Sudan, or to coal mines, it is presenting a series of vivid illustrations which summarise the country or industry to be dealt with, but not necessarily with scenes which are minutely described as they are shown. The indirect commentary enables a film to do *two things at once*; to illustrate what can be illustrated, and what should be illustrated, whilst *simultaneously* enlarging upon the same subject. We watch and listen, and both the visual and verbal presentations supplement each other to create as complete a picture of a particular subject as possible.

News reels are worth your critical attention. When the photography is poor, you will realise that it is due to the weather, and the difficult conditions under which the crews had to work, but regard each sequence critically, and judge whether what you are seeing is really *news*, or something inserted to fill up the reel, thereby taking on an importance and an urgency which don't belong to it. Listen to the commentary and notice whether it is just informing you of what you are looking at, or adding something more to the illustrations. Above all, follow up news reel sequences by finding out all you can about the backgrounds of events and what led up to them. After a while, consider whether the news reels you have been seeing for some time are really widening your knowledge of other peoples, and if those peoples are being

presented to you in a fair and unexaggerated way, or being misrepresented for political reasons, thereby helping to divide one group from another, making you forget that people everywhere are ordinary human beings who are very similar.

A News Reel that Would Tell You Why

If audiences become increasingly critical towards news reels, and they are given more programme space in the future, the longer and more analytical news reel may eventually appear—the news reel which would become a real documentary film—and when you think of it, the news reel really should be the finest documentary film of all. It should look behind current events and explain to you why they happen. Instead of being content to show, say, war scenes, peace scenes, or mass demonstrations, it should help you to learn *why* there is war, or peace, or mass demonstrations.

We hope all news reels will become more like the *March of Time* and *This Modern Age*, though not obviously American, nor British, nor of any country, but *world* news reels, international in view-point, and presenting peoples of all countries impartially. Brief current events—races, processions, sports, etc.—could be joined on to the end of such longer documentary news, just as last minute news is now printed in the stop press columns of newspapers.

One last word. Think sometimes of the news reel crews, cameramen, recordist, editors, who have one of the toughest jobs in films. They work on land, on the sea, and in the air. Time is always on their doorsteps. They have to work fast. They need courage and endurance to carry out the work within the limits set for them. They achieve a lot, but their limits must be widened so that the news reel of the future can give really important things their proper emphasis, and show us whenever possible *why* they happen.

7

MAGIC AND MYSTERY : THE CARTOON

NOW COMES THE MOST FASCINATING OF ALL FILMS—THE cartoon.

You will remember how, in each one of the preceding chapters, I have stressed the point that the film can present *reality*—can bring to you more vividly than anything else can, the real world? Film shows you actual scenes in China, India, Australia, Sweden, Spain, anywhere—and, moreover, brings you the voices of the people in those places, and the natural sounds around them.

If film could do no more than that it would be the most wonderful medium of expression, capable of showing the people of each country what the others are really like. But this is the extraordinary fact—not only is film unequalled in its power to present reality, but it is also unequalled in its power to present *unreality*—to show you fairy-tale worlds of make-believe, of fantasy, of the most unbelievable and beautiful places and things, in the form of cartoons.

It is hard to decide which is the greatest achievement—to present reality, or to present fantasy—and harder still to try to decide whether we prefer ordinary feature films with real people, to cartoons with strange, whimsical, drawn characters. Perhaps, therefore, it is wisest to be content to regard film as a great medium for both, and to enjoy watching both the real world and the unreal one it presents.

When we watch an ordinary feature film which is well made and well acted, we believe in it. It can or should be able to grip us so strongly that we really do believe that what we see

is actually happening, but when we watch a cartoon film we enjoy all the extraordinary things that occur although *we do not believe in them*. How could we?

In a world where flowers have smiling faces, and sway and nod to music, where animals have voices, and where the whole landscape, and the clouds above it, and the seas around it, change their shapes, we enjoy the fantasy and the absurdity of it all, just as most of us enjoy reading fairy tales, for, of course, these are film fairy tales. The tales told by Grimm and Hans Andersen enable our imaginations to conjure up pictures of the castles, the crooked streets, the fairies, elves, and witches, as we read, but the film cartoon conjures up fantastic and fairy-like scenes for us. It brings to life beings and places which could never be created by any other means.

Something That Everyone Can Understand

But the cartoon is an extremely important type of film and is something far greater than just an amusing or unusual kind of entertainment. It is a true film which is employing the screen to the very best advantage because it is dependent upon pictures, and not upon dialogue. With few exceptions, the cartoon film can be understood in all parts of the world, because there are few if any language barriers in it. Its appeal is universal. That is of the utmost importance. All ordinary films which depend on dialogue spoken by the characters on the screen are by no means universal in appeal. They are understandable only by those peoples who speak the language that is spoken in them.

The universal film is infinitely superior to the national film, and the cartoon is the most successful example of it up to the present.

Pictures Tell Stories Quicker than Words

Ever since the world began, men have been telling stories with pictures. Primitive people carved signs on rocks, and in

the mud and sand around the caves in which they lived and, as the great museums reveal, sign language, or the use of pictures and designs to convey messages, has been practised through all the centuries. For instance those on Egyptian temple walls are picture strips which carry along the action of the story or the message rather like the comic strips in our newspapers to-day. Picture books, too, give further examples of how illustrations can tell stories without employing words. These stories reach the brain by the quickest route—*through the eyes*.

The cartoon film is carrying on the sign or picture-language tradition, and has reached undreamt of heights of fantasy. There is nothing in the cinema quite so remarkable as the modern feature-length film cartoon. By bringing drawings to life, it has achieved something which past generations never thought of doing. There is something magical about the cartoon film, something magical and mysterious which fills us with wonder whilst we are laughing at the funny behaviour of all the creatures on the screen.

The stars of cartoon films, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, Tom and Jerry, Popeye, Sylvester, Mr Magoo, were the result of years of patient experiment by the artists who created them. Of these Walt Disney is the most famous. There have been other clever people besides Disney making cartoons, such as Pat Sullivan who, over thirty years ago, was creating Felix the Cat. Today there are Mr Magoo and other cartoons from the UPA Studios in America and those of Halas and Batchelor, who made the full-length *Animal Farm*, in Britain. But it was Disney who first gave the cartoon film the importance of a feature film.

I think it was about twenty-nine years ago that Mickey Mouse first appeared, and he was soon to become the best loved of screen stars. In 1931, Technicolor was introduced into the cartoon in a lovely Silly Symphony called *Flowers and Trees* which was accompanied by the music of Mendelssohn.

Rossini and Chopin. These early cartoons, and all those that followed for years, were short, lasting only about eight or ten minutes.

In time we ceased to be amazed at the extraordinary and fantastic events which occurred in cartoons. Instead we marvelled at the way Disney always invented more and more ingenious situations.

A Film the Whole World Loved

And then about twenty years ago, he presented the world with his first feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was an instant success, although before it appeared many doubts were expressed about the ability of a film without real people in it to hold the interest of an audience for over an hour. But it succeeded, with its colourful charm, lovable dwarfs, and the romantic story it told. The several songs sung in this film were translated into eleven languages, and the famous *Some Day My Prince Will Come*, became popular in most countries in the world.

After that came one full-length cartoon after another—*Bambi*, the story of the life of the deer from the time it was born until it became king of the forest; *Dumbo*, the funny, pathetic little elephant; *Pinocchio*, with his little conscience, Jiminy, who guides him through life's battles; *Fantasia*, a combination of pictures and great music; *The Three Caballeros*, in which cartoon characters and human beings appeared side by side; all these have made us familiar with a type of film-making as different from ordinary films as is a photograph from an oil painting. The short cartoon seems almost to have disappeared, which is a pity, for despite the success of the feature length kind, there was something unique and refreshing about the cartoon that lasted under ten minutes; no padding was necessary.

However, details apart, if you've seen any or all of those feature cartoons you will remember them. If you haven't, no

written words can describe them adequately. What is of far greater importance is the fact that the cartoon film speaks a *world language*. You have probably heard how Esperanto was invented in the hope that it would provide a universal language, and thus bring all nations together. Well, the cartoon film *has* provided a universal language in its own peculiar way. Pictures are 'signs' all men understand. Music is the *language* of mankind as a whole, and pictures accompanied by music are the foundations of the film cartoon.

Now here's a remarkable thing. However unusual and fantastic the events on the screen may be, we immediately understand them. If flowers turn into trumpets, elephants fly in the sky, or toadstools dance, we don't ponder over the improbability of such sights, nor cease to enjoy the cartoons because they are making the impossible happen. We expect them to be improbable and impossible. That is real fantasy, and *real satire* too. Disney's creations of dogs, birds, flowers, trees, fish, are really caricatures of us—most of them, anyway. He makes us laugh at ourselves, by making us think we are laughing at his own funny creatures. If he shows us a hippopotamus performing a graceful ballet dance with absurd unconscious clumsiness, there is more than a possibility that it is very like some fat lady somewhere whom we all seem to know or have seen. The fear of animals in a forest fire is our fear, too. The wonder of a little deer at the strangeness, and bigness, and hardness of the world, is *our* wonderment. We know just how it is feeling.

How a Cartoon Is Made

I am going to explain, as simply and as non-technically as possible, how the cartoon film is made, and in doing this I shall really be describing how every kind of cartoon and diagram is given movement, because the method is the same.

There is a world of difference between a full-length feature-cartoon, and one of those diagrams or maps in which arrows

move backwards and forwards, and lines appear and disappear, but both are made in much the same way. Of course, the cartoons involve far more detail and artistry.

I have already explained how the shutter in a film camera revolves so that it cuts off the light which comes through the lens whilst the film strip moves down in the camera gate, and how this shutter movement enables a fresh unexposed section of the film to be brought into position for the next photograph to be taken. In other words, the gate in the camera, past which the film runs, can be likened to a very tiny cinema screen in shape, and it is the space through which the light enters on to the film, the shutter creating the dividing line between each one of these frame exposures.

Now it is just the action of that shutter in cutting off the light which has made the moving cartoon film possible, enabling it to bring inanimate objects to life. This is what happens, and sometimes it is known as 'one-turn-one-picture' technique.

Let us begin with the simplest of all examples—a straight line, which we wish to show drawing itself or moving from the left hand side of the screen to the right hand side.

The ordinary film camera, as we have learnt, runs at the rate of twenty-four separate pictures a second when it is filming ordinary people and places, but that would never do for filming cartoons. Instead, we should have to employ a camera fitted with a gearing device that *stops the film instantly after each single exposure*. The film must remain motionless until we are ready to take the next exposure, because we must make only one exposure at a time, and stop the camera at the very moment when the shutter is covering the film. So we use a stop motion camera. It is fixed so that it looks downwards directly on to a level table-top upon which a sheet of drawing paper is laid. The positions of both the camera lens and the paper must be exactly right in relation to each other, that is, straight and level. We then begin by making the first single exposure

—one frame of film being exposed, so that the blank sheet of paper has been photographed, with no action occurring upon it. We might well take several more single exposures in the same way, to show the blank paper for a brief period before the straight line begins to appear.

The Drawing Begins to Move

Then we begin the line which is to start on the left, by drawing just an *eighth of an inch*—a mere little dash. We remove our hand and pencil out of sight of the camera lens, and take another single exposure (after which the camera stops with the shutter covering the film). Now we add another eighth of an inch, joining it to the first one, and take another single picture. By this time our line will have extended to two eighths of an inch. We repeat the same process, an eighth of an inch each time, until our line has extended right across the drawing paper. When the film is projected on to the screen we should see, if we have been careful, a line suddenly appear on the left and run smoothly across to the opposite side without any human aid. That is how, in broad principle, all cartoons are made, and all lines, arrows, dots, dashes, animals, people, trees, flowers, everything that is drawn, are made to move on the screen.

If we had wanted a wavy line to wriggle across the screen we should have drawn each eighth of an inch so that curving waves had been formed, bit by bit. If we wished one wavy line to wriggle across from the left, whilst another was wriggling in from the right, we should have had to draw them both in the same way, and at the same time, of course, adding little bits between the exposing of each single frame. Every cartoon is constructed in this slow methodical way. To make that pencil line cross the screen might take us two or three hours, filming it at a snail's pace, so to speak. Remember that when projected on the screen, the film runs at a speed of 24 frames a second, and you will realise that one artist

would spend several hours on producing film that you see for one second.

Since there are sixteen frames to every foot of film, and film is projected at 24 frames per second, and 90 feet a minute; the footage to be devoted to any cartoon action is of extreme importance, and every movement has to be worked out mathematically. Let's see, therefore, how many feet of film would be required for our pencil line to run across the screen. Our drawing paper would be about a foot and a half wide by a foot deep. We should start the line about one inch from the edge of the paper and make it cross to within an inch of the other edge, so that the line will be *one foot four inches* long. To draw that line in separate eighths of an inch will therefore need 128 separate exposures which, at 16 frames per foot, means *8 feet of film*, which will take *just over 6 seconds to project*. If we wished the line to move more quickly we should draw each section longer than an eighth of an inch. If more slowly, then we should draw it in shorter lengths.

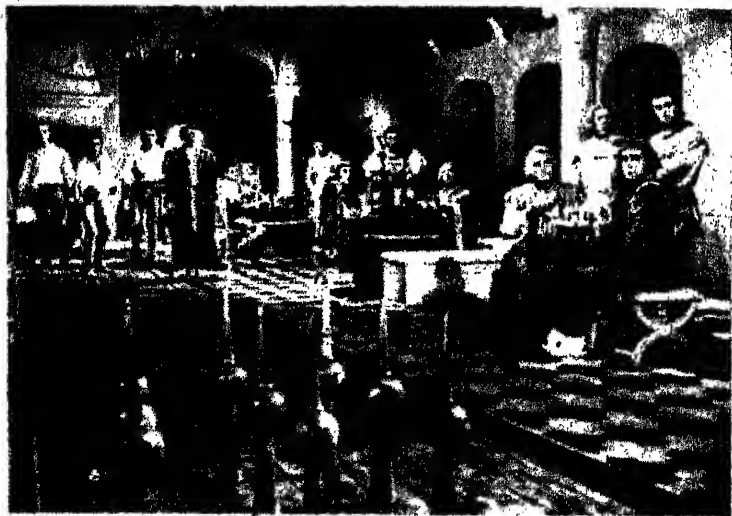
How to Make a Teapot Dance

Any inanimate object can be made to move on the screen without apparent human aid by the same method. A teapot, for instance, placed in the middle of a table and given very slight turns prior to single exposures being taken, perhaps fifty times, will turn right round on the screen. By varying the movement, it can be made to waltz, rush from side to side or, if an exposure is taken of it standing on the left, and it is moved over to the right, and the next exposure taken, then on the screen the teapot will apparently move from one side to the other *in a moment*, as if by magic.

If an arrow has to shoot forward on a map, or a dotted line has to encircle a place or an object, then the arrow is drawn, bit by bit, or the dotted line is made by adding, say, three dots at a time, and then exposing a single frame in the same way.



Above · The puppet-makers in their workshop ; a scene from the technicolour film 'Tales of Hoffmann'. Below · An exciting moment in 'Highly Dangerous', with Margaret Lockwood as Frances Conway about to creep out from cover into enemy territory.



Above • Wonderful impersonations of Lenin and Stalin in the Russian film 'Lenin in October'. Below • A lovely setting for the French film 'Les Visiteurs du Soir'.

When characters are involved, many more details have to be worked out. If Sylvester is to be made to walk across the screen, each one of his leg movements, nose movements, tail movements, eye movements, and ear movements must be treated separately, each being drawn in a slightly different position (equivalent to the eighth of an inch for our straight line) so that he is not jerked about, but moves smoothly and naturally.

Imagine, then, the tremendous amount of detailed work necessary when drawing a scene in a Disney feature in which there are various characters, all moving independently, and as so frequently occurs, the backgrounds moving too, such as sea waves, clouds, or rain falling.

You might have imagined that the studios wherein Mickey, Tom and Jerry, Mr Magoo and all the rest of the cartoon characters are created are a crazy kind of fairyland. In a way perhaps they are, but everything is based on mathematical precision, and it is by far the most painstaking and exacting kind of film-making of all. It could not be otherwise.

Hundreds of Sylvesters a Minute

Just to make Sylvester wander across the screen with his nose to the ground, his eyes rolling, and his tail waving, requires hundreds of separate drawings. Each one is drawn and painted on a transparent sheet of celluloid which fits exactly into a flat frame on a table, with the camera above, looking down at it. The actual *scene*, or background, say a road bordered by a hedge, with hills beyond, is on another sheet, which is placed down first, and the drawings of Sylvester laid on top of it. But to begin the action, several exposures would be taken of the scene with no action occurring in it, just as when filming the straight line we began by showing the blank drawing paper in several frames before the pencil drew the first eighth of an inch. Then the first of the Sylvester drawings would be fixed in front of the background showing, perhaps, a tiny

tip of his nose. An exposure would be taken, the sheet removed, and the next one put in its place. This would show his nose a bit further in. By changing one transparent sheet for another, the cat is made to enter, stage by stage.

But each one of those drawings would be slightly different in various little ways—each difference having been most carefully worked out and measured. The angle of the nose, the position of the pupil of the eye, the height of each paw from the ground, the slant of the tail—all these will be altered or advanced in each drawing, so that Sylvester will really come to life when the scene is projected. It might take an experienced team of animators eight hours to produce 50 feet of film, which will run for just over half a minute.

Hundreds of artists are employed in drawing and painting on the celluloid sheets, some concentrating on one particular feature of one particular animal or character, and all governed by the key drawings which are created in the first instance.

Disney was the first to give depth to cartoons, whereas previously they were flat. This result is achieved with a special camera that photographs the action through several layers of glass. In between and upon these layers the characters are made to move. We look into a scene of depth instead of at a flat surface like a painting.

The Drawings Begin to Talk

Frequently, of course, the backgrounds are made to move. A boat travelling from, say, left to right is moved, fraction by fraction, whilst the waves and the sky move from right to left, also fraction by fraction. This kind of background is a panorama as distinct from the scene that doesn't move. Whilst all the drawings are being made, music, voices, and sound effects are being recorded separately—both the animators of the drawings and the sound unit working from the same script timing-instructions, so that time and footage control completely govern their work. The voices are fitted

on to the characters after they are filmed; but it is music which is the soul of the cartoon film. Its rhythm governs all the movement. In no other type of film does music play so important a part and the genius of Disney enabled the pictures and the music to merge so completely that pictorial and musical rhythm became one.

It is the rhythm to which we respond. The flowers sway, the fishes turn, the rain falls, the wings flap, the feet march, the branches nod, the whole fantastic world moves to the rhythmic beat. We feel the same urge to dance when someone puts on a gramophone record, or the radio is playing.

Similarly, skilful use of music enables us to *share* the rhythm with the characters on the screen. The artist creates rhythm not only by the perfect timing of his action to music, but by the assembling of his scenes. Thus, whilst each scene contains its own pictorial rhythm, so the specially timed changes of scene add to the rhythm of the film as a whole.

There are numerous makers of cartoon films but Disney has gained a world reputation by carrying fantasy further than most, and also by having made feature-length cartoons which have proved widely popular.

Something Only the Screen Can Give Us

It is difficult to see what further wonderful improvements can be made in cartoon production, for already they are presented in colour, with the loveliest music and effects, and latterly with depth, while some cartoonists are already experimenting with the wide screen, and so I do not think we need concern ourselves with possible *technical* progress in the future. Instead, we should learn to regard the cartoon as the kind of film, or one of the kinds of film, which really proves the degree to which the screen is an *independent* medium of expression, that is, independent of all other forms. Feature films based on novels and plays naturally invite us to draw comparisons between the screen and the stage or the printed word, but

the cartoon makes all such comparisons both impossible and unnecessary. Only the screen can present us with such extraordinary scenes of unreality.

But wait! Look deeper into that unreality, and you may find very vivid reflections of the human world. The whimsical creatures, and the moving landscapes, are portraying our weaknesses in their own comical ways. We all have consciences like Pinocchio; we all grow up in wonder as Bambi did; we are all mixtures of helplessness and defiance, foolishness and wisdom; and sure enough we find our counterparts in the fantastic creatures on the screen, which make us laugh at ourselves and, if we are willing, teach us quite a lot about the most difficult art of all—the art of living wisely.

Naturally, we cannot dissect the cartoon in the same way as the ordinary film, and judge the respective merits of Director, Cameraman, Recordist, Cutter, and so on, for quite a different kind of technical and artistic team is responsible for this sort of production. But we can become fully conscious of the *film values* of the cartoon, of the maximum use of music, of the way in which dialogue is reduced to something *less* than of secondary importance, and of how, *by pictures*, the stories are presented so that they can be understood and appreciated wherever people gather together.

Therein lies their greatness, and perhaps the makers of ordinary films will take a lesson from cartoons, and learn in time how to make films with human beings which, by increasing the use of music and sounds, and reducing the use of dialogue, will be understood by all peoples.

8

WHERE FILMS COME FROM

NOW THAT WE HAVE STUDIED FILMS OF MANY TYPES—LONG and short—fictional and factual—realistic and fantastic—let us consider the different countries from which they come, and their special characteristics.

We know, of course, that by far the greatest number of films come from America, and that they have done so for years. In fact we see so many American films in proportion to British and other productions, that most of us, when we think of the cinema, instinctively think of American films. This is not surprising, for over seventy per cent of the films shown in Britain are American.

The main reason is that film production is one of America's most important industries, just as ship-building is in Britain. Millions of pounds are devoted to film-making in Hollywood every year, and American films are distributed in most parts of the world.

American films earn fifteen to twenty million pounds a year in Britain, and so you can see what a large and important industry it is. They have been developing as an industry longer than films in any other country, and during the last twenty-five or thirty years American producers have been concentrating upon increasing their production and distribution in every possible direction. The size of America is in its favour. It is a huge continent and so its films bring in large sums of money from all the cinemas in the 48 States, apart from earnings obtained from Britain and in other

countries. America leapt ahead in film-making during the 1914-1918 war, and she has kept ahead.

It is because America is strong financially and progressive technically, that her enormous and never-ceasing output of films has made us all so American-film-minded. By the very weight of numbers America has impressed her films on our minds.

First-Class Technique or a Good Story?

Until recently, American technical progress was unequalled, but to-day British technical standards are just as good, and occasionally better. That is a point to remember, and we should remember, at the same time, to distinguish between the subject-matter of a film, and its technical qualities. Many American film stories are feeble and rubbishy, but they are presented with such technical polish and efficiency that, unless we are very critical and discerning, we enjoy them at the time even though we may realise afterwards how absurd and unreal they were. What Britain must do, now that she has succeeded in reaching equally high technical standards, is to see that her stories are worth while and briskly told, and as gripping as the best American ones.

The inevitable question is, of course, does one prefer American to British films. The answer is of very great importance. We have learnt by now that *every* film should be judged on its own merits. We might like a particular American film, and fail to like a particular British film, but this would not justify us in saying that we prefer *all* American films to *all* British films. Films cannot be lumped together in that way. Every nation is certain to produce both good and bad films. Nevertheless, the question remains. It is always being asked, and so it must be answered, but this can only be done in general terms. Many of us do prefer most American films to all others, or think we do, for the simple reason that we see more of them than of any other kind; and so they are far more familiar to us.

Millions are Dazzled by the Stars

A very large number of us prefer American films to others because America has educated us to like them, and also because American film stars have won our hearts, not only by their good looks, their attractive personalities, their acting abilities and their nice clothes, but because of the extremely efficient way in which they are advertised.

The publicity of America's film industry is far-reaching and very skilfully planned. Barely a day goes by without little anecdotes about film stars appearing in the papers, and whenever an American film star visits Britain, every move he or she makes is described, and there are photographs of the esteemed visitor in restaurants, entering theatres, walking in London's streets, and so on. America knows how to build up her stars in the press, and on the screen. Millions of cinema-goers become so attached to their favourite film stars that they know their mannerisms, their faces and figures and voices almost better than they know those of their own relations.

Other reasons for the popularity of the American film are its smooth swiftness, and the infectious personality of the perfectly groomed American man and woman as they are portrayed on the screen. There are a lot of people in Britain who do not like the American accent, but they are in the minority. Most of us have become so used to it that we can follow every syllable as easily as if we were Americans. This is an achievement, for Americans talk quickly, and their particular brand of slang is jerked out at lightning speed.

Many of us who have never been to America have, solely through films, come to feel that we know and understand American people intimately. That shows the power of the screen doesn't it? It is unfortunate that some of the American feature films give us wrong ideas about the American people. Half of them do *not* live in apartments that are the

last word in luxury, while the other half go about in gangs robbing and murdering, as some popular fiction films might make us think. Many of the American people themselves don't like the impression given of them in American films, for the great majority of them are people like ourselves, though their film-makers often seem to pick out all the most bizarre and unnatural characters and then exaggerate a bit on top of that! That doesn't matter much as long as we remember that we are not seeing the American people as they really are. But it makes it all the more important that there should be documentary and news films in which we can see *real* Americans, as well as the exciting, dramatic and amusing but often *unreal* films which are for entertainment only.*

To return to the reasons for the popularity and success of American films. The size of America, and its wonderful scenery, varying from deserts and mountains to tropical, palm-fringed waters, helps her film-makers, and so does Hollywood's fine climate with its brilliant sunshine. A large proportion of scenes in films are exteriors, so that a climate that can be relied on is a boon.

I think, however, that the main reasons why American films are so generally liked, are that the typical American is a crisp, clean-cut character, particularly suitable for filming, and that American producers combine commercial ability with showmanship, and see that nothing interferes with the entertainment value of the films they make.

Films that Advertise America

As a result of the 'cold war' we have all heard a great deal about propaganda of various kinds, and we have seen examples of film propaganda which has sometimes been rather dull. America long ago developed propaganda on the biggest scale, quite apart from political needs, for her

* See Chapter 4 on Documentary films.

feature films are extremely skilful propaganda for *America*. Whatever a story may be about, it enables us to see America's great cities, her luxurious hotels, her fine automobiles, her lovely clothes, her majestic scenery, and so on. Of course the America we see in fictional films is not always the *real* America. It is often glorified, but the background is there, with the result that most of us who have never travelled further than, say, 100 miles from our homes, and sometimes less, are familiar with America's famous skyline of skyscrapers, the streets of New York City, Washington, the prairies, and so on, and we don't know half as much about Britain.

Quite obviously many millions like American films, or our cinemas would not always be crowded, but it would be incorrect and unfair to say that those millions *prefer* American films to British films; there just aren't enough British films to enable audiences to see as many of them as of American ones. British films are in the minority in the cinemas of this country, and as a result of financial losses many British studios have been forced to close, or have been bought by television companies, in recent years. In addition a considerable number of the films made in our remaining studios are made with American money and often feature American stars.

Quantity is not everything, and in the long run, quality counts. But in view of the never ending output of American films, the general average quality is surprisingly high, and, as I have said, even when the subject is thin, or stupid, or unreal, the *technical* standards remain high.

On the other hand, British films are often intelligent, presenting first-class material. *Brief Encounter*, *Scott of the Antarctic*, *Genevieve*, *Whiskey Galore*, *The Cruel Sea*, *Richard III*, and *The Divided Heart* are only a few of the noteworthy films produced in Britain in recent years. But however good British films may be they are so outnumbered by American pro-

ductions that the latter usually remain more vividly in the memory.

Quality or Quantity?—the British Film's Battle

There is another point. You know the old saying that familiarity breeds contempt. Because we in Britain are familiar with English people and scenes we may not find English films as intriguing as American ones. That is one point of view, anyway, though some people are stirred more by seeing portrayed on the screen the drama, heroism, hopes, fears, disappointments, delights and misadventures of the sort of people they might meet in their own town, at their work, in a bus or at a dance, than those who are strange to them. Others again can appreciate equally films that show them people and places they *don't* know in real life so long as the films themselves are good of their kind. These are the cinema-goers who probably get the most out of their entertainment.

On the whole, British films probably contain more good sense and good taste than most American films, but sometimes they appear to us to move rather slowly. This is mainly because English people speak more slowly than Americans do, and our tempo of living is not so fast. Some years ago, British films lacked technical polish and spectacle; to-day they lack nothing, but they have to compete with a far greater output of films from America. In some ways, therefore, the rivalry is resolving itself into a battle between British *quality* and American *quantity*, but there will always be good and indifferent films made in both countries.

That is why there is really no complete answer to the question of whether British or American films are best. Instead, the discriminating film-goer will always judge each production on its own merits, and forget, as far as he can, where it was made. Now that technical perfection has been achieved in British studios, and men like Anthony Asquith, Mikhael Anderson, the Boulting Brothers, Sir Carol Reed,

and others are making first-class films, we have every opportunity to study high technical standards, and to talk in terms of good films, or not so good ones, instead of being concerned chiefly with their country of origin.

French and Italian Films

From one point of view, American and British films can be grouped together for they are both products of English speaking countries, and so are not understandable in those countries where English is not spoken, unless they have subtitles translated into various languages. It is easy, too easy, to forget the fact that millions of people do not speak English, and that the films we see are incomprehensible in many parts of the world, which again emphasises what a limitation dialogue imposes.

But this cuts both ways, for many excellent films are made in other countries and we rarely if ever see them, because they are not in English. Among the most exciting films made since the war have been those from Italy. Immediately after the defeat of Italy and the withdrawal of the German army there was a great outburst of film-making activity. Italian directors had for years been chafing under the restrictions of Fascism and of wartime control, which had forced them to make artificial films which were politically 'harmless', and with the retreat of the Germans they had their chance. Rossellini made *Open City* and *Paisa*, frank realistic pictures which exposed war and Fascism for what they were. The quality which gave these films their force was their uncompromising realism; no attempt was made to glamorise actors or to build effective sets; photography was as urgent and rough as in news reels taken under the most difficult conditions. So far from detracting from the effectiveness of these films their lack of gloss gave them an added feeling of truth. There were other directors besides Rossellini who felt this urge to break with artificiality and studio finish, and to

work instead with untrained actors in the streets and villages of Italy. The greatest of them was Vittoria de Sica, who used the 'neo-realistic' method, as it came to be called, in making his two great films *Bicycle Thieves* and *Umberto D.* De Sica has frequently worked in collaboration with the writer Zavattini, and it is Zavattini who has been the chief spokesman for the neo-realists and perhaps their chief inspiration. Zavattini declares that there is no need for the cinema to invent dramatic stories or to seek out great events as the subjects of films: drama is all around us, and the cinema is at its best when it is peering closely at the ordinary lives of ordinary people. The watchword of neo-realism is 'dailiness': this attitude undoubtedly is in part a reaction against Fascism, with its emphasis on grandeur and its love of 'heroes'. Today a younger generation of Italian film-makers, much influenced by neo-realism, is arising, including Rossi and Fellini.

The French cinema had a tremendous reputation among film-lovers in the 'thirties and although a good deal of the work of French directors since the war has been disappointing, France remains one of the foremost film-making countries of the world, in terms of quality. Today the barriers against foreign-language films seem to be breaking down a little and it is possible for people in the larger towns at least to see a certain number of French films. It is therefore worth noting the names of some of the most famous of French directors, such as René Clair, Jean Renoir (who also makes films in English from time to time), Marcel Carné, Robert Bresson and Georges Franju. These are men of the highest talent. The films they make are unlike those of any other nation. Whether they are poetic fantasies, like René Clair's *Le Million* or Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, or realistic studies such as Georges Franju's film about war victims *Hôtel des Invalides*, they have a quality about them which is unmistakably French, a delicacy of touch and

a kind of pictorial poetry. French film stars are among the greatest actors on the screen. Remember the names of Danielle Darrieux, Jean Gabin and the superb clown Fernandel.

The Japanese Cinema

Although Japan has for thirty years been one of the major film-producing countries of the world (before the war she produced more films in some years than America) the work of Japanese directors was practically unknown until 1951 outside the Far East. The film which first broke through the frontiers was *Rashomon*, a wonderfully acted drama of the middle ages. It was followed by others of the same sort, of which the most successful was *The Seven Samurai*, another historical drama. There is another school of film-makers in Japan which is nearer to the Italian neo-realists in its outlook, believing that the cinema should look about it at life today and not rely on the traditional stories of the past for its subjects. It is the historical dramas, however, which have caught the attention of the Western world, and the reason is not far to seek. It lies in the extraordinary acting style of the Japanese stars. Most of these are highly trained theatrical performers, who have learned by hard work and severe discipline a method of acting which, though dramatic, is intensely restrained. The best Japanese actors in the traditional style can convey an almost frightening passion by the merest quivering of a face muscle, or by the use of the eyes alone in an immobile face. Because of the power of the close-up in film-making this technique can be made doubly effective. Japanese films—at least those we have seen here—are poles apart from the Italian films which are so much admired: the Italian films convince by their realistic 'every-day' quality, the Japanese historical dramas on the other hand rely upon the most carefully planned and artificial techniques; the Italian neo-realists avoid the use

of professional actors, while the Japanese actors are professionals to their finger-tips.

The Russian Film is Meant to Teach

Then there is the output of the great Russian film industry which, for quite different reasons, is unlike any other. It is organised by the State and is concerned at least as much with education as with entertainment. Russia contains millions of people living in the various republics, such as Ukraine, Turkemenia and Georgia, who speak their own languages, and so the films they see have to be made in those languages. Each large republic has its own film studio, the largest being in Moscow, where all kinds of films are made, from features to cartoons.

The early, and greatest, period of Russian film-making was in the 'twenties and early 'thirties, when Eisenstein and Pudovkin, the most original of all Russian film-makers, were making films now regarded as classics of the cinema about the rebirth of Russia after the Revolution of 1917. I know of no other films which have succeeded in creating drama in pictures so vividly, and which make one *feel* the intensity of the struggle of the people, on the land, in the cities, on the railroads, on the battlefields and in the home, as do these early Soviet films. The Russian cinema today is more conventional, and rarely reaches the heights attained by Eisenstein and Pudovkin, or by Dovjenko, perhaps the greatest of the 'poetic' film-makers of the world. But the level remains high, and from time to time a fine film such as the Russian version, in colour, of *Othello*, by Youvkevich, wins admiration in the West.

Films from All Over the World

Films are also being produced in Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, India; Egypt, Brazil and Argentina, Spain, Greece and in most of the countries of the Commonwealth. Language

continues to be an obstacle to the free exchange of films between nations, but it is important that the finest films in all languages should as far as possible be seen by everyone. One of the most reliable means of learning of their existence is through the British Film Institute, 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2, which keeps records of all films of which copies are available in Britain. It also runs its own theatre, the National Film Theatre, on the South Bank, where films shown nowhere else in Britain can often be seen.

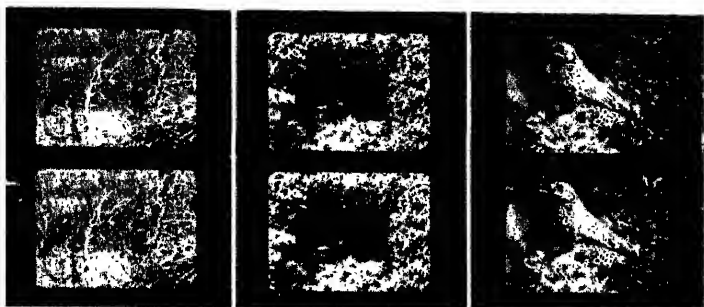
If you belong to a club, you could ask the Secretary to apply for membership of the Institute, and then you can be certain of being kept informed of films of importance from all parts of the world. Members of a film society can arrange to hire copies of films which otherwise would not be seen in their town. And do judge every film you see on its merits, *whether it is British, American, Russian* or is made by any other nation. If it is a really great film its country of origin doesn't matter. The world's greatest works of art are for all men. The greatest artists belong to all nations. So do the greatest films.

9

FILMS MADE SPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED THE CENSOR'S CERTIFICATE AT the beginning of every film except news reels (which are not censored), and you probably know how the British Board of Film Censors classifies films. Those considered suitable only for adults are given 'X' Certificates; others considered more suitable for adults than children are given an 'A' Certificate. Those suitable for all ages are given a 'U' Certificate. But has it occurred to you that *all* films which are shown in cinemas, are made chiefly *for adults* and, while this is quite understandable, it means that the ordinary cinema programme does not, as a rule, cater for *those who are too young to be regarded as adults*. It stands to reason that there are countless things of special interest to young people which are naturally not included in films made for grown-ups, but it has never been possible, of course, to have two kinds of cinemas, one for adults, and another for younger people. Young people, therefore, have had to be content with films made to entertain grown-ups. This works as satisfactorily as can be expected, because all young people are growing into adults and so the dividing line is a thin one. But young people should have films of *their own*, made by people who understand what they will enjoy and who can leave grown-ups' likes and dislikes out of their plans.

Realising this, cinema owners arrange special shows for children and the film industry in Britain and in some other countries is making special films for young folk between the ages of seven and fourteen. I don't mean educational class-



The screen shows wonderful close-ups of nature—birds in their natural surroundings and tiny details of growing things.



Two films made especially for young people's cinema clubs. A scene from 'Jean's Plan' (above) and (below) 'The Little Ballerina', with the famous ballet dancer Margot Fonteyn.

room subjects, but real entertainment films so that just as there are cinemas for adults, so there shall be shows for the young. You will have heard of the Cinema Clubs which have opened all over the country, giving special shows on Saturday mornings from 9.30 until noon, and if you go to them, you will have noticed that even though they are for young people only, many of the films shown are similar to the ones you see in ordinary cinemas—cartoons, features and serials. This is because there has not been time yet to produce enough special films to fill all the Saturday programmes, but it is hoped that one day all Cinema Clubs will be showing programmes which are quite different from ordinary cinema shows.

Producers of special films for young people have the task of finding out exactly what kind of films will be most appreciated. This is not easy because young people have been seeing only *adult* films. Producers have to find out, as far as possible, what kind of films they like most, and to decide which are most suitable for them to see. This takes time and that explains why there are at present comparatively few films made specially for children's cinemas. Already, however, several extremely good feature films have been completed especially for these shows, notably the beautiful Australian film, *Bush Christmas*, *Johnny on the Run* and *Adventure in the Hopfields*. Many more are planned.

Meanwhile, the best kind of features and serials shown in ordinary cinemas are included in the Club programmes, whilst production of special films goes ahead. You will realise, of course, how important this Cinema Club movement is, because the young audiences of to-day are the adult cinemagoers of the future, and the Clubs give them a chance to judge films and to select programmes from their earliest cinema-going days.

There are children's cinema clubs in all parts of the country and today over a million children attend them each Saturday morning. The large 'circuits' have well organised chains of clubs in their cinemas, with a central office in London to

select the programmes and advise the cinema managers on the running of the clubs. The largest are the Odeon and Gaumont Clubs of the Rank Organisation, the A.B.C. Minors Club and the Granada Club. Only 'U' films are shown, with a steadily increasing proportion of films specially made for performances of this sort.

What You See at a Cinema Club

There has been a good deal of criticism from time to time about the way in which children's performances are conducted and the sort of film chosen for them. As a result of this criticism the Government set up a Committee in 1943 with Professor Wheare as its Chairman to look into the whole question. The Committee listened to evidence from hundreds of witnesses of every sort—film-makers, cinema managers, film renters, teachers, youth leaders, police, magistrates and many more—and it was not until two years later, in 1950, that they produced their Report. The Committee found nothing seriously wrong with the cinema clubs, and found no evidence either that the ordinary adult cinema was likely to do much harm to children provided they continued to be protected by the British Board of Film Censors from seeing unsuitable films. They had some minor criticisms to make, however, about the way in which some cinema clubs were run: they suggested for example that some rather silly 'club songs' should be dropped, and that the practice of asking children to repeat a 'club promise' (which few of them took seriously) should also go. What worried the members of the Committee most, however, was that there were too few really suitable films shown for the younger children. They blamed no one for this; very few films had been specially made for young children, and because films cost so much to make and the takings of the cinema clubs are really quite small, they thought it unlikely that many would be made unless some special arrangements were made. They gave particular

praise to the Rank Organisation, which for some years had been making a few films every year specially for the clubs. The programme of a children's club performance varies a good deal from the ordinary adult one. The programme usually opens with a group of short films. One of the most popular of these is often the cartoon, which appeals to everyone. There is generally a documentary film of some sort in the programme, or one of the special magazine films made for the cinema clubs called *Our Magazine*. Each contains several short items of special interest to children. By the way, these magazine films are good examples of films made *specially* for young people. Because they are short and consist of several miscellaneous subject, they are easier to produce than the special long features. Full-length features, however, (for cinema club audiences a feature film should last about one hour) are increasing in numbers and in a few years there should be enough to meet the weekly demand.

Among the group of short films there may be a short story film, lasting perhaps twenty minutes, specially made for the younger children in the audience. One of the difficulties of arranging programmes for cinema clubs is that the audience ranges in age from five to thirteen or fourteen; obviously a film which interests thirteen-year-old boys, for instance, may not be suitable for six-year-old girls. Conversely a simple story film which the very young children will love may be scorned by the over-twelves. The programme planners try to meet the difficulty by putting into the programme something for everybody. The short story films are an example of the way in which the special interests of the very young members of the audience are looked after. Very often animals feature in these little films, as in *Juno Helps Out* (Juno was a dog) and *Mardi and the Monkey*, a charming film made in Malaya. Another popular item in the Saturday programme is the serial—it is often the most popular of all, if one can judge by the shouts of delight with which it is

greeted. Only recently has an attempt been made in England to produce serials specially for the clubs. A serial, if all its parts are added together, makes a very long film and so is expensive to produce. Most of the serials which have been shown in the past have been turned out very quickly and cheaply by the American studios and although they have had plenty of excitement their quality has not always been as good as those who plan the club programmes would have wished. Now at last well made serials with all the excitement and suspense of the familiar American ones, but which pay rather more attention to acting and film quality, besides having more sensible stories, are being made in Britain.

Lastly comes the feature film itself. It may have been made in the first place for an adult audience, but if it has been given a 'U' Certificate by the Film Censor and has a good simple story with plenty of lively action it may well appeal to children at least as much as to adults. Perhaps most popular of all are Westerns and comedies. But today the feature film is as likely as not to have been made specially for the cinema clubs; if this is the case, it is most likely to be a Children's Film Foundation production.

Children's Film Foundation, like its predecessor Children's Entertainment Films, has been set up by the film industry for the sole purpose of providing suitable films of good quality for children's performances. Children's Entertainment Films was set up by the Rank Organisation and owed its start to the strong personal interest of Mr Arthur Rank. In 1943, during the War, Mr Rank asked Miss Mary Field, who was well known for her work in making educational and other films, of which the famous *Secrets of Nature* series were among the best, to undertake the production of children's films. Since that time Mary Field has devoted herself to the task of supplying films for the child audiences not only of this country but of the world, for she believes that an art as universally popular as the cinema can do much to bring the nations of the world

together. After working for about seven years with the Rank Organisation as head of Children's Entertainment Films, Mary Field helped to found the present organisation, Children's Film Foundation, of which she is also the head. The new organisation was not attached to any one company, but was financed (out of the British Film Production Fund) by the whole of the British Film Industry. Leaders of the industry are directors of the Foundation and they elect an independent Chairman, which honour was given to Mr Arthur Rank.

Mary Field has not been content merely to go on making films of the sort always thought to be suitable for young children. She set out to find out whether the ideas which most adults had about the sort of films children liked were really correct. By careful observation and long experiment she reached clear conclusions about the special problems of making films for children. She found that young audiences like to have their attention caught at the very beginning, but that the story must develop at a pace which they can easily follow. This does not at all mean that the story must be slow, but only that sudden developments which change the situation in which the characters find themselves in the film, must be very clearly explained. She discovered many other things about children's taste in films, of which the most important of all was that it could be changed: for example, it had always been argued that it would be a mistake to change the old style serial, because however silly its story and characters the child audience loved it, and would reject anything different. Mary Field showed that the reason children liked the serial was because of the action and because they liked to be kept guessing about what was going to happen next week—not because the films were bad. When she produced a serial *Raiders of the River* with an intelligent story and believable characters the Saturday audience soon learnt to like it even more than the old style serial. In the same way the young audience quickly came to prefer the

feature films of Children's Film Foundation, with children playing the leading parts, to the Westerns and raucous comedies which had been the chief fare of the clubs in the past. The same was true of child audiences in other countries to which the Children's Film Foundation films have been exported.

There is no need to eliminate the adult film entirely from cinema Club programmes. Many films produced for ordinary performances are well suited for children, although they are usually better for being reduced in length, if this can be done without destroying the quality of the film. For this reason the British Board of Film Censors now has one member whose particular job it is to look for films which, with or without cutting, can be used at the Saturday performances. In this way a list of recommended children's films has been built up and endeavours are being made to persuade all who run children's matinees or cinema clubs to pick their programmes from films in this list.

A Chance to Get the Films You Like

The young people of Britain are very specially privileged, for not only are they provided with special shows, but their wishes, their likes and dislikes, are so closely studied. The audiences at the clubs are encouraged to write down their honest opinions of the films shown, and their criticisms, passed on to Children's Film Foundation by the managers of cinemas, are of the greatest value to the producers. Thus the cinema clubs offer more to the new generation than laughs and thrills; they help young filmgoers to grow up to be the most critical and perceptive of any generation of cinema audiences and this, as I cannot repeat too often, will influence the producers of films the world over to make finer films, and to use the screen to show countries to each other in a way that only the moving picture can do. It is no exaggeration to say that just as the future of the world lies in the hands of the rising generation, so does the future of the film industry.

10

ARE YOU A FILM CRITIC?

NOW THAT YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW AND WHERE FILMS are made, your visits to the cinema are likely to be far more exciting. I don't suppose you will want to go regularly regardless of what is on the programme, for you will find yourself beginning to select your films, and having very good reasons for your selections.

Think for a moment of the many people visiting cinemas who don't know why they like or dislike a film, who have not learnt the difference between an original film story and an adaptation of a novel or play, and who know little or nothing about all the different technical and artistic contributions which, together, make the finished film. They know, of course, whether a film entertains or fails to entertain. But they don't know *why* a film is good or not so good. To know what to look for is proof that your critical powers are being used.

You learnt that a good film, like a house, needs a good foundation—the story—and if it is a story which has been specially written for the screen, then it is likely to be better than the adaptation of a novel or a play which depends chiefly on dialogue. There *are* admirable films which have been adapted from books and plays, but you can be sure that when they are first-class the scenarists have been skilful enough to reshape them, and to insert new scenes which are specially suitable for the screen. The result may be a good film, but it is not the story in the book. Those who expect to see all the things that happened in the book happen on the screen in the same way will be disappointed.

When a Film Is not a Film

You will have realised, too, that to give of its best the film should become an independent form of art, for the screen can present both facts and fantasy in a way that books, lectures, newspapers and theatres cannot do. It ought, therefore, to do so in its own peculiar way. That way is, of course, by pictures and by movement, by appealing to the eye before everything else. If you remember this you will soon be able to decide whether a film is real film art or whether it is trying to do something that could much better be done by a book or in the theatre. We may be highly entertained at the cinema by a light comedy which has extremely witty dialogue, likeable characters and studio settings that are the equivalent of stage scenery, but this isn't a film at all—only a photographed stage play. The cinema ought to have been showing us action and dramatic realism which was *meant* to be presented in the form of moving pictures and in no other way. Do not think that there is no room for the well-produced film which depends largely on dialogue, but remember that unless we are constantly working towards the true film which depends on movement for its effects, the cinema will never become an independent form of art and rank with literature, drama, music, painting, sculpture, architecture and poetry. It will never do so while its producers are content to borrow material from books and plays simply because *as* books and plays they were a success.

The cinema's main attraction is what it offers us *to look at*, so it ought to show us fine examples of picture composition, and the camera should be given every opportunity to capture lovely effects. It is such a pity that only a small proportion of cinema-goers are picture conscious. As long as what they are looking at is clearly visible, they are more or less satisfied. But for the discerning cinema-goer a film can be spoilt if the photography is hard. This is the result of flat lighting, when

no attempt has been made to model the characters and to give artistic light and shade effects by careful placing of the lamps. Do look out, therefore, for first-class lighting and photography, and notice how well-chosen angles and the grouping of the figures can heighten the drama of a scene.

How to Enjoy Films More

We live in what is called the machine age or, more extravagantly, the atomic age, but whichever it is, considerably more attention is paid to material than to spiritual and aesthetic things, and a great many people declare that they have little or no time to devote to the arts—to the beautiful things in life. Many of them are not satisfied or entirely happy; they feel they are missing something, but they don't know what. On the other hand, people who *have* developed a sense of beauty feel that life would hardly be worth living without it. The world is full of beauty in the most unexpected places, but most of it is not seen. There are the lovely shapes of buildings and towers and spires silhouetted against evening skies, reflections in water of trees and clouds which inspire poets to describe their loveliness. They are there for us to see but we miss them; often the poetry they inspired remains unread by all but a few.

Wherever we go, in town or country, there is evidence of beauty, created both by nature and by man. Drama, ballet and music also offer us beauty in different ways. A sense of beauty and a sense of humour are two of the greatest assets anyone can possess. Life without laughter is as incomplete as life without art. So don't forget Danny Kaye and Mr Magoo. They have a message for us, too. Art has many different shapes. It has nothing to do with mere prettiness. A scene in a film which is played in the most ugly surroundings might in itself be very beautiful; sincere acting of great human emotions could make it so.

Films can give everyone the opportunity to see and apprec-

iate the more obvious kinds of beauty, both by showing lovely landscapes, which they would probably never have the chance to see otherwise, and by opening their eyes to the beauty of very ordinary, everyday things. When films don't do this they are depriving the cinema-goer of something which the screen, better than anything else, could give them.

Don't think that a sense of beauty is something to be kept for special occasions, and used only when one goes to a concert, reads poetry, visits a picture gallery, or wishes to show a friend what a lot one knows! Don't think it is something removed from everyday life. It is something which can and should influence us all the time, wherever we may be.

The film can teach us a lot about creating beautiful surroundings. In recent years, the work of the Art Director in designing beautiful interiors, floral decoration, and in the use he makes of curtains, pictures, ornaments and books has, or should have, opened our eyes to beauty. And yet many people fail to notice the details of screen settings. If we are not to miss these details we must, of course, be observant about the things which matter, instead of being wizards at spotting all the things that matter least.

You'll have to look and listen for evidence of beauty in many different forms. Maybe, you'll have to dig down a bit and look beneath the surface, and be determined not to be diverted by all the distracting, noisy, unimportant things around you. A person who has not developed a sense of beauty is most certainly only half alive and, similarly, a film-goer without that sense reduces his enjoyment of films by at least half.

How to Judge a Film

Remember, too, how to judge a film so that you will know exactly why you like it, or do not like it, and never be afraid of not liking a film which everyone else seems to like, and *vice versa*. If you are honestly applying your knowledge, and

your critical faculties, then rely upon them, and stand by your own opinion. If you meet someone who knows more than you do about films, and the arts generally, learn from him. If he doesn't know as much as you do, help him to widen his vision.

Study the story, and also the output of particular Producers and watch for the characteristic touches of the great Directors. Notice photographic values, lighting, and grouping, and details of settings. Watch how a sequence is presented in numerous changing angles, and how those angles fit together with precision. Learn to recognise editing and assembling, and faulty work too. Above all, notice how much a film depends upon dialogue to tell its story, and how much it depends upon appeal to the eye. Keep in mind all the time the wonderful things that the film can do, how it can show you the entire world, and do not be content if all you see is an artificial world built in a studio, unless the subject is sheer fantasy.

What Do the Critics Say ?

Do you ever read what the film critics say about a film before you go to see it? It is very interesting to find out whether your opinion agrees with theirs. Re-read their criticisms on your return from the cinema, to refresh your memory on certain points. It is not often a film critic is really wrong in his or her judgment, but you should bear in mind that a critic may be applying standards which are not your own.

Some critics do not analyse films so much as estimate their entertainment value and popular appeal. Others judge by very high standards indeed. Each newspaper appeals to a certain type of reader. Some are for those who are not very selective, or who are not interested in the development of film as an independent art; others are for the more serious-minded. You will find it helpful, to begin with at any rate, to study as many different critics as you can. Not only should

you compare what a critic says with your own private opinion of a film, but you should also compare the critics with each other.

The film industry has its own professional papers and magazines which are published both daily and weekly, and they contain criticisms of all films shown to those in the film trade. These criticisms are read by the renters and exhibitors, and greatly influence the bookings of the films. Consequently, the trade paper critics have a most responsible task, and they carry it out with great ability and impartiality, based on long experience.

Do not, of course, confuse a review written by a film critic with a write-up about a film. Write-ups are published in local and provincial papers, and tell you what forthcoming films are about, and who the stars are. Write-ups usually make the films sound inviting, because they are a form of publicity, and back up advertisements of local cinemas in the papers. They are written up from material provided by the renters of the films. You will realise, therefore, what a wealth of difference there is between a brief article which is really advertising this week's or next week's programme, and a careful analytical criticism of films by impartial critics.

We began by discussing why we go to the cinema, and decided that most of us go to be entertained, to be taken out of ourselves, and that in time it may become a habit to go without bothering very much about what we are going to see. I then tried to show you how, nice as it is to be entertained, it is nicer still to be entertained in a really worthwhile way.

But whether the films we see are important or unimportant, they all influence our outward and visible life. Americanisms have crept into our speech because we have been listening to so many American characters on the screen. Americanisms, or slang, are very expressive and terse, even though they do not claim to be either beautiful or musical. They

combine slovenly forms of expression with a brisk way of speaking.

Similarly, films influence our manners, and our fashions. It would be difficult to find anyone to-day beyond the influence of the cinema. Feminine hair styles, make-up, and manicure all over the world have followed the fashions set by the stars. In remote country places one sees styles which, before the coming of the cinema, the country people would never have heard of. Not all such influences are undesirable. Whilst any thinking person realises that to introduce American slang into one's conversation is nothing to be proud about, on the other hand the attention paid to personal appearance and the general smartening up which has occurred during recent years, despite shortages of so many things, are largely the result of the influence of the film. Although a great many feminine fashion whims result in an artificial appearance, and conceal the real person, attention to such details in moderation is better than a complete disregard for one's appearance.

Can We See Real Life on the Screen?

Do films truly interpret the age we live in? Documentary films, yes; news reels, to a small degree; fictional feature films, no, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that most feature films give a false picture by exaggerating dramatic and comedy situations, and setting characters in backgrounds which are not always true to life.

It is the documentary or factual film that shows us the world in which we live, and here the film comes into its own, for its backgrounds are the real world, and the players ordinary people. As I have said before, it is most unfortunate that documentary films can't be seen in the majority of our cinemas, but it is to be hoped that there will be a place for them in the programmes of the future.

Meanwhile, as the documentary film of real life is obviously

the true film, and does not show artificial or exaggerated situations, it stands to reason that a blending of the methods used to produce the documentary film with those used in feature production would result in the ideal type of film. Already, as we have seen, there are a few examples of great fictional feature films which are, to some extent, documentary also, because their stories are set against natural backgrounds. This is a far more life-like kind of film than most of the ordinary 'features,' and the more of such films we have the better. The only way for us to get them is to go to see any that come our way, thus showing that they are the sort of films we want.

You will find that the average feature film often ignores most of the major problems of life and, instead, encourages us to forget them. Such films are called escapist. They are popular because they enable millions of people to forget the difficulties of everyday life and to relax. To enable them to do this it is obvious that the screen stories must not be too closely related to life. This escapism seems justifiable when you first think of it, but it does not help in the long run because one cannot escape from life. The most intelligent directors and script writers see that there is often drama, heroism, suspense and humour in the lives of ordinary people, and they show this in their films. They give us stories in which we can recognise the sort of people we know, or have met or have heard about—people in which we can *believe*. *Bicycle Thieves* was that sort of film. The truly great film is the kind that will help us to escape from escapism and meet truth face to face, and help us to understand life better. If we spend all our spare time escaping we may be quite sure that the situations from which we try to escape will surround us on our return.

That is why the documentary film is doing such an excellent job. And it is telling us not only about what is going on in our country, but also about other countries. If we can only see sufficient documentary films, and read what we can

about the subjects they deal with, our general knowledge will open a whole new world to us.

We want entertainment, of course, and the screen can give us that. But it can give us so much more. It can tell us things and show us places which we should most likely know nothing about otherwise. It can make these things most interesting and exciting. There never was such a chance, before films came, of seeing for ourselves what is going on in the rest of the world. Not to make the most of this chance is throwing away one of the greatest advantages of living in a modern world. Fifty years ago or more the chance wouldn't have been there. If the public shows that it appreciates these films and wants more of them, it will get more of them.

Why Are Poor Films Made?

Perhaps you have sometimes asked yourself, after seeing a particularly feeble film, how it ever came to be made. To be fair, it is not very often we do see films that are poor in every way. A film is not necessarily feeble or bad just because it does not happen to appeal to us, for it may appeal to many other people. But sometimes a film appeals to no one. It may be badly acted, and have totally unconvincing situations. Well, you can be sure it was not produced by any of the great film companies either here or in America, for they make certain that their productions reach the highest possible standards of entertainment. Absolute rubbish is usually made by small producers who are concerned with footage and not with quality. By footage, I mean they regard film in terms of length only, like selling so many yards of cloth and, knowing there is a shortage of films the world over and that most films of feature length (and anything over 3,500 feet counts as a feature film) are fairly sure of a market, they make their poor films as quickly and as cheaply as they can. There are bound to be such films, but one need not bother about them, nor use them as an excuse for criticising the cinema as a

whole. The majority of films to-day are excellent in every way, except that the stories they are based upon are not always worthy of all the time and money spent to produce them. You notice how we always come back to the *story*—the subject-matter—the foundations.

If the average screen story had reached the same high standard as technical ability, the film of to-day would be infinitely greater, more worthy of our respect, and nearer to being an independent art form. Instead, stories are borrowed from all other possible sources because of their successes as stories or plays, and nothing hinders films from developing on the lines most suited to them so much as this does.

When the Star is too Dazzling

But whether features have good, weak, or unsuitable stories, their producers put the necessary ingredients into them to make them box office successes, and the first of those ingredients is, of course, the star. As I have said, one need not entirely condemn the star system, nor the habit so many of us have developed of selecting films *because of the stars in them*, even though we are sometimes missing the best films by merely following the stars. But it is true that, while the cinema-goer's *first* thought in choosing a film is 'Who's the star?', the film itself will not improve.

The early Soviet film-makers went to the other extreme; they made the story the feature, and the players more or less anonymous. Even when a film featured an actor who played in, say, a screen biography, such as that of Lenin, so much care was taken over casting, make-up, direction, and acting that the actor sank his personality into the character he was playing, instead of being encouraged to remain a famous star, and indulging in all his famous mannerisms. This impersonal type of production is far more true to life and, of course, far less artificial than the story which features a world-famous star. Then we are conscious all the time that the part

is not being played by the actual character the star is representing, but that the character is being used as a vehicle to enable the star to shine with his or her accustomed personal brilliance.

But the box office demands stars, spectacle, thrills, and musical numbers and so, by hook or by crook, feature films are written so as to contain them.

It would be foolish for those producing costly films to ignore the fact that they must bring in money, but it is even more foolish to sacrifice all imagination, good taste, and intelligence for box office receipts because, in the long run, the purely commercial entertainment film will cease to satisfy an increasingly critical public. As people realise more and more clearly what the film can do they will grow impatient when it does not do it.

If, both in the immediate future and in the years to come, you develop and apply your critical faculties, you will be surprised how, in time, whilst enjoying a film as a whole, you will also be separating and analysing the story, the direction, the camerawork, the lighting, the recording, the editing, the art direction, and the acting.

You cannot achieve that critical standard all at once, of course, but you can begin immediately, and you will find it very helpful to keep a book containing your observations on the films you see, noting whether they appealed to you or not, and why. It will provide an invaluable record for the future, not only enabling you to check the progress made by, say, a particular Director, but also by showing whether the films which appealed to you become classics. I think you will find, over and over again, that the weakness of a production is in the story, that it is unconvincing or not suitable for the screen.

If, in your Club, or in the special kind of non-theatrical film shows which you attend, you become more familiar with documentary films, you will be seeing two kinds of pre-

ductions simultaneously—two kinds which run *parallel*, the theatrical and the non-theatrical.

The rising generation of film-goers—that is, *you*—will decide the sort of film we shall have in the future. So far, in films, as in everyday life, material progress has far out-distanced our spiritual progress; film has advanced technically to a far greater degree than it has artistically, imaginatively, and internationally.

We can be sure that films will go on improving technically. There will be more and better colour photography, better sound systems, new screens whose size and shape will vary in the course of the film, and three-dimensional films. We shall have to watch that the subjects of the films and their treatment reach the same high standard. We want more films in which the stories are set against real backgrounds, where fact and fiction are blended, but where it is quite clear which is fact and which is fiction. We want films in which what we see is always more important than what we hear, and dialogue has a secondary place. The stage is the place for dialogue to be given first importance. Films are too important in their own right to copy the theatre, or to borrow material from the pages of novels. The cinema, too, can present all nations to all other nations, and really show us how the other half of the world lives.

How can we get more of the best kind of films? First of all by knowing what is the best, and then by choosing to see it whenever we get the chance.

I hope that, after reading this book, you will get even more pleasure and excitement out of going to the cinema than you did before.

FILMS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD SEE

Below is a list of feature and short films, compiled by the British Film Institute, which have been made in the last forty years. Most of these early films have become classics, and the later ones are likely to be considered classics in the future.

This list does not, of course, include *every* notable film of the last forty years, nor does it represent the kind of films made by each country. It is a selection of some of the world's most famous productions, and a guide to the work of various great Directors. From time to time some of these films are shown by Film Societies, Film Clubs, and Repertory Cinemas throughout the country, and everyone who takes the cinema seriously should try to see them. They include some, however, which film-goers will not appreciate until they are grown up.

Year	Country of Origin	Title	Type of Film*	Director
1915	America	<i>The Birth of a Nation</i>	F.	D. W. Griffith
1915	America	<i>Intolerance</i>	F.	D. W. Griffith
1919	Germany	<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>	F.	Robert Wiene
1919	Sweden	<i>The Phantom Carriage</i>	F.	Victor Sjöström
1920	America	<i>Nanook of the North</i>	F.D.	Robert Flaherty
1922	America	<i>Robin Hood</i>	F.	Allan Dwan
1923	Germany	<i>Siegfried</i>	F.	Fritz Lang
1923	America	<i>The Covered Wagon</i>	F.	James Cruze
1923	America	<i>A Woman of Paris</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1924	America	<i>Greed</i>	F.	Erich von Stroheim
1925	America	<i>The Thief of Bagdad</i>	F.	Raoul Walsh
1925	Russia	<i>The Battleship Potemkin</i>	F.D.	S. M. Eisenstein
1925	America	<i>The Gold Rush</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1926	America	<i>Ben Hur</i>	F.	Fred Niblo
1926	Germany	<i>The Student of Prague</i>	F.	Henrik Galeen
1927	America	<i>The General</i>	F.	Buster Keaton
1927	Russia	<i>The End of St. Petersburg</i>	F.D.	V. I. Pudovkin
1928	America	<i>The Singing Fool</i>	F.	Lloyd Bacon
1928	France	<i>La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc</i>	F.	Karl Dreyer
1928	France	<i>The Italian Straw Hat</i>	F.	René Clair

* F. Feature. F.D. Feature-Documentary. D. Documentary.

GOING TO THE CINEMA

Year	Country of Origin	Title	Type of Film*	Director
			D.	John Grierson
1929	Britain	<i>Drifters</i>	F.D.	G. W. Pabst
1929	Germany	<i>The White Hell of Pitz Palu</i>	F.	Joseph von Sternberg
1929	Germany	<i>The Blue Angel</i>	F.	King Vidor
1929	America	<i>Hallelujah!</i>	F.	René Clair
1929	France	<i>Sous Les Toits de Paris</i>	F.	Lewis Milestone
1930	America	<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>	F.	A. Dovzhenko
1930	Russia	<i>Earth</i>	F.	Wesley Ruggles
1930	America	<i>Cimarron</i>	F.	René Clair
1930	France	<i>Le Million</i>	F.	G. W. Pabst
1931	Germany	<i>Kameradschaft</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1931	America	<i>City Lights</i>	F.	Julien Duvivier
1932	France	<i>Poil de Carotte</i>	F.	Leontine Sagan
1932	Germany	<i>Mädchen in Uniform</i>	F.	Jean Vigo
1933	France	<i>Zéro de Conduite</i>	F.D.	Basil Wright
1934	Britain	<i>Song of Ceylon</i>	F.D.	Robert Flaherty
1934	Britain	<i>Man of Aran</i>	F.	Frank Lloyd
1935	America	<i>Mutiny on the Bounty</i>	D.	Basil Wright and Harry Watt
1935	Britain	<i>Night Mail</i>	F.	Marcel Carné
1935	France	<i>Le Jour se Lève</i>	F.	Fritz Lang
1936	America	<i>Fury</i>	D.	J. Riefenstahl
1936	Germany	<i>The Triumph of the Will</i>	F.	J. Freyder
1936	France	<i>La Kermesse Héroïque</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1936	America	<i>Modern Times</i>	F.	Marx Brothers
1936	America	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	F.	Frank Capra
1936	America	<i>Mr. Deeds Goes to Town</i>	F.	Jean Renoir
1937	France	<i>La Grande Illusion</i>	F.	Gustav Ucicky
1937	Germany	<i>The Broken Jug</i>	F.	Walt Disney
1938	America	<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	F.	Alfred Hitchcock
1938	Britain	<i>The Lady Vanishes</i>	F.	Mark Donaskoi
1938	Russia	<i>The Childhood of Maxim Gorki</i>	F.	John Ford
1940	America	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	F.	Victor Fleming
1940	America	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1940	America	<i>The Great Dictator</i>	F.	Walt Disney
1940	America	<i>Pinochio</i>	F.	Michael Powell
1941	Britain	<i>49th Parallel</i>	F.	Orson Welles
1941	America	<i>Citizen Kane</i>	F.	Walt Disney
1942	America	<i>Bambi</i>	D.	Humphrey Jennings
1943	Britain	<i>Fires Were Started</i>	D.	Jennings

F. Feature. F.D. Feature-Documentary D. Documentary

FILMS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD SEE 157

Year	Country	Title	Rating	Director
1941	Britain	<i>San Francisco</i>	F.	Charles F. Powell
1942	Britain	<i>The Way We Live Now</i>	F.	Carol Reed
1943	Dutch-Germ.	<i>The Day of Wrath</i>	F.	Carl Dreyer
1945	France	<i>Les Destinées du Haut</i>	D.	René Clement
1945	Britain	<i>First Yarnment</i>	F.	David Lean
1945	Britain	<i>Henry V.</i>	F.	Lawrence Olivier
1945	Britain	<i>World of Peace</i>	F.D.	Paul Robeson
1946	France	<i>Les Destinées</i>	D.	G. Renquist
1947	America	<i>Moulin Rouge</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1947	Britain	<i>Take My Life</i>	F.	Carol Reed
1947	Australia	<i>Back to Back</i>	F.D.	Ralph Smart
1947	Britain	<i>Great Expectations</i>	F.	Ronald Neame
1947	Britain	<i>Harriet</i>	F.	Lawrence Olivier
1947	Italy	<i>Open City</i>	D.	Roberto Rossellini
1948	France	<i>Monsieur Vincent</i>	F.	Marcel Carné
1948	America	<i>The Naked City</i>	F.D.	John Doe
1948	America	<i>Louise Brooks</i>	F.D.	Robert Flaherty
1949	Britain	<i>The Third Man</i>	F.	Carol Reed
1949	Italy	<i>Bicycle Thieves</i>	F.D.	Vittorio De Sica
1950	America	<i>Treasure Island</i>	F.	Walt Disney
1950	France	<i>La Bête</i>	F.	Max Ophüls
1950	America	<i>On the Town</i>	F.	V. Minnelli
1951	America	<i>Gerald McBoing-Boing</i>	C.	Robert Cannon
1951	Britain	<i>The River</i>	F.	Jean Renoir
1951	America	<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>	F.	John Huston
1951	Japan	<i>Rashomon</i>	F.	A. Kurosawa
1951	Italy	<i>Miracle in Milan</i>	F.	Vittorio de Sica
1952	France	<i>Les Jeux Interdits</i>	F.	René Clement
1952	America	<i>Limelight</i>	F.	Charles Chaplin
1952	America	<i>High Noon</i>	F.	F. Zinnemann
1952	Italy	<i>Umberto D.</i>	F.	Vittorio de Sica
1953	Britain	<i>Genocide</i>	F.	Henry Hathaway
1953	France	<i>Diary of a Country Priest</i>	F.	Robert Bresson
1954	Britain	<i>The Divided Heart</i>	F.	Charles Crichton
1954	Brazil	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	F.	Luiz Buñuel
1954	Japan	<i>Gate of Hell</i>	F.	Kiyugasa
1955	Britain	<i>Richard III</i>	F.	Laurence Olivier
1955	Britain	<i>Thursdays Children</i>	D.	Lindsay Anderson
1956	India	<i>Pathar Pancholi</i>	F.	Satyajit Ray
1956	Italy	<i>The Dunes</i>	F.	Federico Fellini
1956	France	<i>The Silent World</i>	D.	J. Y. Escoffier

F. Feature. F.D. Feature-Documentary. D. Documentary. C. Cartoon.
 * X. Certificate.

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